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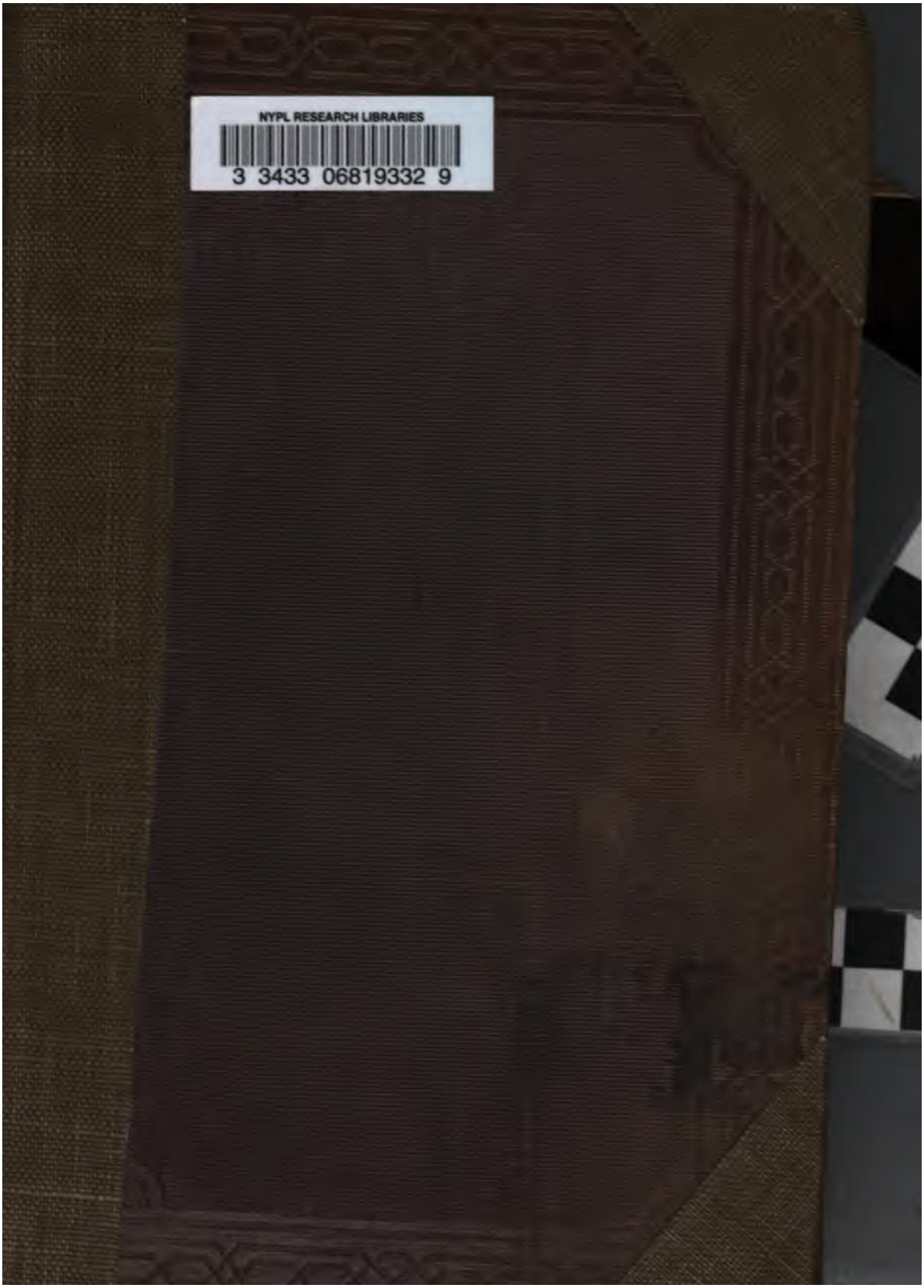
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THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.



THE HISTORY

OF

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

BY THE LATE

REV. JOSEPH MILNER, A.M.

WITH ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS, BY THE LATE

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DEAN OF CARLISLE, AND PRESIDENT OF

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED THROUGHOUT

BY THE REV. THOMAS GRANTHAM, B.D.

RECTOR OF BRAMBER WITH BOTOLPH IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX, SOMETIME FELLOW AND TUTOR OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. AND RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF KILDARE.

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CHAP. XII.

THE CHURCH UNDER VALENTINIAN—AMBROSE APPOINTED BISHOP OF MILAN.

Let us turn our eyes to a more cheerful prospect in the West; in the East, the only comfortable circumstance has been, that God left not himself without witness, but marked his real church by a number of faithful sufferers. Valentinian, the elder brother of Valens, made a law in the beginning of his reign, that no man should be compelled in religion.* He restrained, however, this general licence soon after, partly by seizing the revenues of the heathen temples, which the emperors annexed to their own patrimony, and partly by the prohibition of divinations and enchantments. On a representation of the governor of Greece, Achaia was allowed still to practise her heathenish follies. Other laws in favour of Christians followed.† One of the supposed oracles of Greece had declared that Christianity should last only 365 years in the world.‡ This period was now expired, and the event had falsified the prediction. In other instances this emperor was very indulgent to the Pagans, who might see themselves, both in the East and West, treated with far more lenity and favour than the Church of Christ was in the East during the whole reign of the two brothers. Themistius, the Pagan philosopher, was struck with the cruelty of Valens;§ and while he insinuated that perhaps God was delighted with

* Though the laws of Valentinian run both in his name and that of his brother, I speak of them as his laws exclusively, because it may fairly be presumed, that he was the principal agent.

† See Cave's Introduction, sect. iv. [p. 53.]

‡ [August. de civit. Dei. l. 18. c. 53.] § [Socrat. iv. c. 32. Soz. vi. c. 36.]

the diversity of sentiments in the world concerning him, he entreated the emperor not to persecute any longer. This is one instance of the illegitimate charity now so common in the world, which founds the principles of moderation on scepticism, instead of on that divine love which is the glory of the Christian religion.

Auxentius, the Arian bishop of Milan, being opposed by Eusebius of Vercellæ, and by Hilary of Poictiers,* imposed on Valentinian by a dexterous use of those ambiguities of speech, in which the Arians all along excelled. Nor is it to be wondered at, that Valentinian should be deceived, since even to this day the patrons of Arianism, by largely dwelling on the perfections of the Son of God, with a cautious omission of the term consubstantial, in a similar way frequently prevail on many, who do not or will not understand the true grounds of the controversy, to suppose that the difference of opinion is merely verbal. Hilary contended, that if this were really the case, the Arians could have no reason to avoid an explicit acknowledgment of the whole truth. To this it may justly be added, that their constant support of those who were undoubted opposers of the divinity of Jesus, and their constant enmity against its explicit defenders, evince the difference to be real, not imaginary; and so it will be felt by every one who feels the worth of his soul, and is forced to see the difference between committing its salvation to the Creator and the creature. With equal justice Hilary complained of the Arian method of supporting their creed by military and imperial power. But he complained in vain; the duplicity of Auxentius prevailed, and he was suffered to continue at Milan in the practice of undermining the faith, without openly attacking it; the constant method of heresy in all ages. Whereas divine truth speaks directly and plainly, and must do so, whatever be the consequence. And in this sincerity the church must continue to the end, supported not by political arts, but by divine influence. In the year 366, died Liberius of Rome. How far he really recovered from his fall under Constantius, is not

Liberius, bishop of Rome, dies, A.D. 366.

* [Hilar. contra Auxent. c. 7—10.] I purposely avoid entering into details of the acts of this great man, as well as of some others, because their lives deserve to be considered in distinct articles.

very apparent. He was succeeded by Damasus, who however was not established in his see without a contest with Ursinus, which cost a number of lives. So much were Christian bishops degenerated. But it should be observed, that there was a material difference in these times between pastors of great cities and those of smaller. What I mean, is well illustrated by Ammianus.* "When I consider," says he, "the magnificence and grandeur of Rome, I do not deny, but that those who are ambitious of this dignity, ought to use all their endeavours to arrive at it: since they by this means procure a certain settlement, where they are enriched by the offerings of the ladies: they ride in chariots, richly clothed; and feast so splendidly, that their tables surpass even those of kings. They might be truly happy, if, contemning the splendour of Rome, they lived like some bishops of the provinces, who by the plainness of their diet, their mean apparel, and the modesty of their looks, which are turned towards the ground, make themselves acceptable to the eternal God and his true worshippers."

Thus far this sensible and candid Pagan, who by the concluding part of the passage appears to have imbibed some Christian notions, and to support that mongrel character, which I have elsewhere attributed to him. While we lament how full history is of these splendid and opulent bishops, and how scanty our materials are concerning the humble and obscure ones, it behoves us to be on our guard against the malignant intimations of profane historians, who represent the church in these times as altogether corrupt. It was very much so at Rome, at Antioch, at Constantinople, and other large cities, especially among the great and the rich. In the story of these, we see continually what an enemy riches are to the divine life. But among the lower orders, and in obscure places, by the confession of Ammianus, upright and exemplary pastors were not wanting; and if we had an historical view of their labours and success, I doubt not but the Church of Christ, even in the fourth century, would be seen with other eyes than it is by many.

I am endeavouring to catch the features of this Church, wherever I can find them in this obscure region. I have distinguished formerly three species of dissenters; the No-

* Fleury b. xvi. 8. [Amm. Mar. l. 27. c. 3.]

vatians, the Meletians, and the Donatists. The first are by far the most respectable: of the second little is known, and that little is not to their credit: the third are flagitious, by the confession of all writers. A fourth appears, the Luciferians, who, if they imbibed the spirit of Lucifer, must have been firm and sincere in the love of the truth. In the year 374, the emperor ordered all who held unlawful assemblies to be banished an hundred miles from Rome. In prosecution of this edict, Damasus seems to have caused a Luciferian presbyter to be apprehended, who held a congregation by night in a private house; and he and some of the same class were banished. Notwithstanding this severity, Damasus could not prevent these dissenters from having a bishop of their own at Rome, called Aurelius, who was succeeded by Ephesus, who also kept his station at Rome, notwithstanding the endeavours of Damasus to remove him. Gregory of Elvira in Spain was another of their bishops, a man whose firmness was extolled by Eusebius of Vercellæ. The Donatists had likewise a bishop at Rome, and another in Spain. But violence and ferocity still mark this people.*

Valen's edict against unlawful assemblies, A.D. 374.

I have represented as fairly as I could, the lights of history. The reader may judge for himself, whether in the general church, we do not seem to behold the first and most dignified rulers degenerated. Damasus, orthodox and violent in the support of orthodoxy, without humility and piety, is as strong a contrast to the primitive bishops, as Sharp, archbishop of St. Andrew's, in the time of Charles II. is to our first reformers. The persecuted Luciferians may seem to resemble the Puritans of the same period; while such men as Eusebius of Vercellæ, and Hilary of Poicters, may be likened to archbishop Leighton. But though the spirit of the Gospel probably prevailed most among the Luciferians, yet, as I have already observed, this spirit was still in a degree preserved among the inferior and obscure pastors of the general church. But a new star is going to appear in the Western world, and it behoves us to attend to its lustre.

Ambrose succeeded the Arian Auxentius at Milan, who died in the year 374. He was born about the year 340,

* Fleury b. xvi. [c. 39.]

while his father was the emperor's lieutenant in France. He was the youngest of three children, Marcellina and Satyrus being born before him. After his father's decease,* his mother with the family returned to Rome, where he made himself master of all the learning that Greece and Latium could afford; at the same time his sister Marcellina, who had devoted herself to a state of virginity, instructed him with much success in the principles of godliness. Being grown to maturity, he pleaded causes with so much dexterity, that he was soon taken notice of by Anicius Probus, pretorian prefect of Italy, who made choice of him to be of his council: and having authority to appoint governors to several provinces, when he gave a commission to him, he said, "Go, and govern more like a bishop than a judge." Ambrose in this office resided at Milan for five years, and was renowned for prudence and justice; when one of those sudden turns of providence, which are so conspicuous in the lives of many persons of eminent godliness, threw him into a course of life extremely different from his former.

Auxentius, bishop of Milan, dies, A.D. 374.

Auxentius, by artifice and dexterity had, as we have seen, imposed on Valentinian, and preserved his seat to his death in the year 374. Immediately the bishops of the province met together concerning the election of a successor. The emperor sent for them, and told them, that they, as men best acquainted with the sacred volume, ought to understand better than he the qualifications necessary for so important a station.† "Choose a man," said he, "fit to instruct by life as well as by doctrine, and we ourselves will readily submit our sceptres to his counsels and direction, and, as men obnoxious to human frailty, will receive his reproofs and admonitions as wholesome physic." The bishops besought him to nominate the person, but Valentinian was resolute in referring the determination to them, as fitter than himself to decide.‡ In the meantime factions

* See Paulinus's Life of Ambrose, prefixed to the works of that Saint. Cave; Fleury.

† [Theodoret iv. c. 6, and 7.

‡ Those who have learnt from modern politics to exclude men of the sacred office from any regard in the councils of princes, will despise the weakness of Valentinian. Those who remember how useful the advice of Jehoiada was to Joash, and who believe that piety and the fear of God are of some consequence in the conduct of human affairs, will commend his conscientiousness and his modesty.

were strong, and the Arian party vigorously laboured to provide a successor worthy of Auxentius. The city was divided, every thing tended toward a tumult, the bishops were consulting, and Ambrose, hearing of these things, hastened to the church of Milan, and exhorted the people to peace and submission to the laws. His speech being finished, an infant's voice was heard in the crowd, "Ambrose is bishop!" The hint was taken at once, the whole assembly cried out, "Ambrose shall be the man!" The factions agreed immediately,* and he whom secular pursuits had seemed to preclude from the notice of either party, was suddenly elected by universal consent.

Ambrose was astonished, and peremptorily refused; nor was any person ever more desirous to obtain the office of a bishop than he was to avoid it. He even used methods which sound strange in our ears, and are by no means justifiable. By exercising severity on malefactors, and by encouraging harlots to come into his house, he took pains to convince them, that he was not that character of mildness and chastity, which he undoubtedly was, and which all believed him to be. This extraordinary hypocrisy was, however, easily detected. Finding it was vain to stem the torrent, he stole out of Milan at midnight, but missing his way, and wandering all night, he found himself in the morning at the gate of Milan. A guard was placed about his person, till the emperor's pleasure should be known, because his consent was necessary to part with a subject in office. Valentinian sincerely consented; and the consent of Ambrose himself alone was wanting. It is pleasing to see the testimony which the human mind, when left to itself, in all ages, gives in favour of modesty and integrity, in consequence of the law written on the heart, which all the corruption of nature and the artifice of Satan cannot easily efface. Ambrose again made his escape, and hid himself in the country-house of a friend. A menacing edict of the emperor brought him again to Milan, because he dared not expose his friend to the resentment of the emperor. Ambrose yielded at length, and Valentinian gave thanks to God and our Saviour, that it had pleased him to make choice of the

Ambrose made bishop of Milan.

* Soc. b. iv. 30. Soz. b. vi. 24.

very person to take care of men's souls, whom he had himself before appointed to preside over their temporal concerns. Valentinian received his general admonitions with reverence; and in particular, hearing him represent the faults of some in authority with great plainness: "I knew," said the emperor, "the honesty of your character before this time, yet I consented to your ordination; follow the divine rules, and cure the maladies into which we are prone to fall."

Ambrose was then about thirty-four years old. Immediately he gave to the church and to the poor all the gold and silver which he had. He gave also his lands to the church, reserving the annual income of them for the use of his sister Marcellina. His family he committed to the care of his brother Satyrus. Thus disengaged from temporal concerns, he gave up himself wholly to the ministry. Having read little else than profane authors, he first applied himself to the study of the Scriptures. Whatever time he could spare from business he devoted to reading: and this he continued to do after he had attained a good degree of knowledge.* I wish Origen had been less the object of his study. But the renown of that Father was great, and this was not an age of evangelical perspicuity. His public labours went hand in hand with his studies. He preached every Lord's day. Arianism through his labours was expelled from Italy.

There was a presbyter of Rome, named Simplician, a man of eminent learning and piety, whom he drew over to Milan, and under whose tuition he improved in theology. For his knowledge must have been very confined when he entered upon his office, and what is very rare, he knew it to be so. Simplician he ever loved and reverenced.† We shall hear again ‡ of this presbyter, when we come to the conversion of Augustine. It pleased God to make him a useful instrument for the instruction of both these luminaries of the Western church, and as he out-lived Ambrose, though very old, he was appointed his successor in the church of Milan. From Simplician, as an instrument, it pleased God successively to convey both to Ambrose and to Augustine that fire of divine love and genuine simplicity in religion,

* Aug. Confess. b. vi. c. 3. † [Aug. Confess. viii. c. 2.]
‡ [See p. 152. of this vol.]

which had very much decayed since the days of Cyprian: and in this slow, but effectual method, the Lord was preparing the way for another great effusion of his Spirit. Ambrose now gave himself wholly to the work of the Lord, and restored purity of doctrine and discipline.

A council of bishops held about this time at Valence, may deserve to be mentioned, on account of one of its rules, which throws some light on the religious state of the times. One Acceptus having been demanded as bishop by the church of Frejus, and having falsely accused himself of some great crime to prevent his ordination, the fathers of the council say, that to cut off occasions of scandal from the profane, they had determined that the testimony which every one gives of himself shall be treated as true, though they were not ignorant that many had acted in this manner, in order to avoid the priesthood. The deceit of Ambrose, in endeavouring to appear what he was not, seems then to have been no singular case. Modesty, tinged with superstition, was a characteristic of the best characters of this age. Evangelical light being dim, the spirit of bondage much prevailed among real saints. Let us be thankful for the clearer light of divine truth, which now shines in the church, and that a good man may enter into holy orders without that excess of fear, which prevailed over Ambrose and Acceptus. But while we wonder that men could use such marvellous arts of falsehood, through modesty and conscientious awe, let us not forget that a future age may be as much astonished at the fearless spirit, with which such numbers can, in our days, rush into the church of Christ, with no other views than those of this world; and let us bewail their intrepid audacity, while we smile at the superstitious simplicity of the age which we are now reviewing.

Valentinian died in the year 375, after a reign of eleven years; survived by his brother Valens about three years.*

Death of Valentinian, A. D. 375.

Violent anger had ever been his predominant evil, and a fit of passion at length cost him his life. Of some men, we must say with the Apostle, that their sins follow after, while others evidence in this life what they are. Of the former dubious sort seems to have been the emperor Valentinian. Fierce and savage

* [Amm. Mar. l. 30. c. 5—9.]

by nature, though of excellent understanding, and, when cool, of the soundest judgment, we have seen him modestly submitting himself to the judgment of bishops in divine things, and also zealous in religion, so far as his knowledge would permit, which seems to have been very small. We are astonished to behold the imperious lion turned into a gentle lamb; and the best use to be made of his character is, to prove how extremely beneficial it is to human society, that princes should be men of some religion. Without this check, Valentinian might have been one of the worst of tyrants; but by the sole means of religion he passes for one of the better sort of princes.

CHAP. XIII.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST UNDER GRATIAN AND THEODOSIUS, TILL THE DEATH OF THE FORMER.

GRATIAN, the elder son of Valentinian, succeeded him in Gaul, Spain, and Britain.* His younger son, an infant, succeeded in Italy, and the rest of the Western world. And some time after Gratian chose Theodosius as his colleague, who reigned in the East.

From his early years there appear unquestionable marks of real godliness in Gratian, to a degree beyond any thing that has yet been seen in any Roman emperor. One of his first actions demonstrates it. The title of high-priest always belonged to the Roman princes.† He justly observed, that as its whole nature was idolatrous, it became not a Christian to assume it. He therefore refused the habit, though the Pagans still gave him the title.

As he was destitute of that ambition which Roman pride had ever indulged, he chose a colleague, for the East, of great abilities, purely for the good of the states, and managed the concerns of his infant brother at Rome with the affection of a father. There, from the beginning of his reign, Gracchus‡ the prefect, as yet only a catechumen, laboured earnestly to subdue idolatry. The mind of this young prince being strongly fixed on divine things, and being conscious of ignorance, he wrote to Ambrose of Milan to

* [Zosim. Hist. 4. c. 19.] † [Zosim. Hist. 4. c. 36.] ‡ Fleury, b. xvii. 24.

this effect: * "Gratian Augustus to Ambrose the religious priest of Almighty God. I much desire to be present in body with him whom I remember absent, and with whom I am united in mind. Come to me immediately, holy priest, that you may teach the doctrine of salvation to one who truly believes; not that he may study for contention, or seek to embrace God rather verbally than mentally, but that the revelation of the Divinity may dwell more intimately in my breast.† For He whom I do not deny, whom I own as my Lord and my God, will not fail to teach me. I would not conceive so meanly of him as to make him a mere creature like myself, who own that I can add nothing to Christ. And yet while I seek to please the Father in celebrating the Son, I do not fear lest the Father should envy the honours ascribed to his Son; nor do I think so highly of my powers of commendation, as to suppose that I can increase the Divinity by my words. I am weak and frail; I extol him as I can, not as the Divinity deserves. With respect to that treatise which you gave me, I beg you would make additions to it by scriptural arguments, to prove the proper Deity of the Holy Ghost." Ambrose, delighted with the vein of serious attention to divine subjects, which appears in this letter, answered him in an ecstasy of satisfaction.—"Most Christian Prince," says he, "modesty, not want of affection, has hitherto prevented me from waiting upon you. If, however, I was not with you personally, I have been present with my prayers, in which consists still more the duty of a pastor.—I use no flattery: you need it not; and moreover it is quite foreign to my office.—Our Judge, whom you confess, and in whom you piously believe, knows that my bowels are refreshed with your faith, your [safety,] and your glory; and that I pray for you not only as in public duty bound, but even with personal affection. He alone has taught you, who said, He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father."‡ Toward the close, he reminds him, that his own arguments for the divinity of the Son, expressed in his letter, are equally conclusive for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, whom we ought not to think

* Ambros. [Op. vol. 4. p. 203. Ep. Gratiani.]
† [Magis aperto pectori . . . insidat.]
‡ [Ep. i. These are only a few extracts from a much

the Father to envy, nor ourselves to be on an equal footing with him, who are mere creatures. Some writings of Ambrose remain to us as the consequence of Gratian's request.

The errors of good men have in some instances proved prejudicial to the church. This was unhappily the case with Ambrose. All the world bore testimony to his sincerity, charity, and piety: but he had not strength to withstand the torrent of superstition, which for some time had been growing. He even augmented it by his immoderate encomiums on virginity. The little acquaintance he had with the Scriptures before his ordination, and the influence of his sister Marcellina, a zealous devotee, will account for this. He wrote treatises on the subject: he reduced the rules of it to a sort of system, and exposed himself to the ill-will of parents, by inducing a considerable number of young women to follow them. It must be confessed, however, that he taught the essentials of Christian faith and love, and built his WOOD, HAY, AND STUBBLE* on the true foundation. He had no other arms but those of persuasion, and his great success showed the piety, as well as superstition of many of the female sex.†

Another part of his conduct was more worthy of his understanding. The ravages of the Goths gave him an opportunity to exercise his liberality. He scrupled not to apply the vessels of the church to the redemption of captives, and vindicated himself against those who censured his conduct.‡ In the instruction of catechumens he employed so much pains, that five bishops could scarcely go through so much labour as he alone. At Sirmium in Illyricum, the Arian bishop Photinus had caused a wide departure from the faith: and there being a vacancy in the year 379, Ambrose was sent for to attend the election of a new bishop. The Empress Justina, mother of young Valentinian, resided there at that time,§ She had conceived a predilection for Arianism, and endeavoured by her authority and influence to expel Ambrose from the church. He continued, however, in his tribunal, though insulted and harassed by the mob. An Arian woman, particularly, had the impudence to lay

* 1 Cor. iii. 12. † Ambrose [de Virginibus.]
‡ [Ambros. de Off. Minist. lib. 2. c. 15. s. 70 and c. 28.]
§ Paulinus. [in vit. Ambros. s. 11, 12.]

hold of his habit, and attempt to draw him among the women, who intended to drag him out of the church. "Though I am unworthy of the priesthood," said he, "it does not become you to lay hands on a pastor; you ought to fear the judgment of God." It is remarkable, that she died the next day. The minds of men were struck with awe, and [Anemius,] an orthodox minister, was elected without molestation. Another story of the same kind deserves to be mentioned here. Two courtiers of the emperor Gratian, being Arians, came to Ambrose, and desired him to preach on our Lord's Incarnation, promising that they would come to hear him the next day. But they, meaning nothing except ridicule and scorn, took their horses, and rode out of town. It is remarkable, that they were both thrown from their horses, and perished. The congregation in the meantime growing impatient under the delay, Ambrose went up into the pulpit, and told them that he was come to pay his debt, but found not his yesterday's creditors to receive it; and then preached on the subject.* Those, with whom one sort of doctrine is as valuable as another, will feel themselves little disposed to relish or believe stories of this kind. But the laws of history require that, where such remarkable facts seem unquestionable, they should not be suppressed, whatever inferences men may choose to draw from them. The humility and piety connected with the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity are well understood by every Christian. But the foundation was here laid for the enmity of Justina, which afterwards brake out against Ambrose in a remarkable manner. At Antioch,† Meletius was now restored, and the churches which had long been afflicted, recovered breath. Constantinople for forty years had been in subjection to Arian impiety and tyranny. By this time few remained in this great city, who knew any thing scriptural; truth and godliness had fled: the times were, however, now favourable for the recovery of the profession of the Gospel, and Gregory of Nazianzum was appointed for this purpose.‡ He found the city in a state little removed from heathenism.

In the year 380, Theodosius, desirous of co-operating

* Paulinus's Life of Ambrose. §. 18.

† [Soz. 7. c. 3.]

‡ [Greg. Naz. Or. 32. tom. 1. p. 511.]

with Gregory and other zealous pastors in the revival of Christianity in the East, published a law, by which he reprobated the heresy of Arius, and expressed his warm approbation of the Nicene faith. He gave notice to Demophilus, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, to embrace the Nicene creed, to unite the people, and to live in peace. Demophilus rejecting his proposal, the emperor ordered him to give up the churches. "If they persecute us in one city," said the heresiarch to the people of his communion, "our Master orders us to flee to another.* To-morrow, therefore, I purpose to hold our assemblies without the city." He found, however, little encouragement to proceed, and afterwards retired to Berœa, where he died six years after.† Thus within forty years from the time that Eusebius of Nicomedia was violently intruded into Constantinople in the room of Paul, the sacred places were restored to the Church of Christ. For so I shall venture to call the Trinitarians, however low and reduced the spirit of godliness was, especially in the East; not only because they held the doctrine of truth, but because whatever of the true spirit of the Gospel was found any where, rested with them. If the reader recollect the barbarities exercised on Paul, and the cruel conduct of the Arians, while in power, he will be struck with the difference between Theodosius and Gregory on one side, and Constantius and Eusebius on the other. I am far from undertaking to vindicate all the proceedings of the patrons of the Nicene faith; but undoubtedly their conduct was full of patience and meekness, compared with that of their opponents. Constantinople was not now made a scene of carnage and violence. Men who fear God will exercise their secular prospriety in religion only to defend the truth, not to persecute its foes. And this is another instance, to be added to the many, which have appeared, of the connexion between Christian principles and holy practice.

Orthodoxy of Theodosius, A. D. 380.

Gregory being now confirmed in the see of Constantinople, the emperor called a council in that city, to settle the distracted state of the Eastern church.‡ There came thither one hundred and fifty bishops, [who professed the Catholic

The second General Council held at Constantinople A. D. 381.

* [Soz. 7. c. 5. Socrat. 5. c. 7.] † [Philostorg. Hist. 9. c. 19.]
‡ [Theodoret. 5. c. 7 & 8. Soz. 7. c. 7.]

faith, and thirty-six of the sect of the Macedonians.] But it was found much easier to expel Arianism and corruption externally than internally. The council was very confused and disorderly, greatly inferior in piety and wisdom to that of Nice, though it be called the second general council. One of the holiest men there was Meletius of Antioch, who died at Constantinople. Gregory justly observed, that as Paulinus was sound in the faith, and of unexceptionable character, there could now be no reason why the unhappy breach, so long continued in that church, should not at once be healed by confirming him in the succession.* But faction was high, and charity was low at this time; he was overruled by the immoderate; and Flavian was constituted the successor of Meletius, as if they took pleasure in lengthening the reign of schism a little: for Paulinus was far advanced in years. In this affair the younger bishops had influenced the elder, though they could assign no better reason than that, finding the bishops of the West ready to support Gregory's opinion, they thought those of the East ought to prevail, because Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh had appeared in Asia, not in Europe. So easy is it in the decline of piety for Christian formalities to be preserved, while human depravity reigns in the temper and spirit. Gregory in disgust soon after gave up his see.

This council very accurately defined the doctrine of the Trinity, and enlarging a little the Nicene creed, they delivered it, as we now have it in our Communion Service. The Macedonian heresy, which blasphemed the Holy Ghost, gave occasion to a more explicit representation of the third Person in the Trinity, which, it must be owned, is there expressed with scriptural precision and clearness.

About the same time Palladius and Secundianus, two Arian bishops, and the chief supporters of that heresy in the West, were condemned, in a council held at Aquileia, by the bishop of Milan, and were formally deposed. It is astonishing with what artificial dexterity Palladius evaded the plain and direct interrogatories of Ambrose,† and while he seemed to honour the Son of God in the same manner as others, and to reduce the contest to a verbal dispute, he still reserved the

Two Arian bishops deposed at Aquileia.

* [Greg. Naz. Carm. de Vitâ suâ.] † Fleury, b. xviii. 10—16.

distinguishing point of Arius. A subtilty ever practised by these heretics!

Theodosius, earnestly desirous to reduce all who professed the Christian name to an uniformity, once more attempted to unite them by a conference at Constantinople. But where the heart was not the same, it appeared that outward conformity produced only hypocrisy. The Novatians alone agreed cordially with the general church in sentiment. And Nectarius, the new-created bishop of Constantinople, lived on a friendly footing with Agelius their bishop, a man of piety and of the first character.* In consequence of this, these dissenters obtained from the emperor as ample a toleration as could reasonably be desired. Heavy and tyrannical penalties were denounced in edicts against the rest, which, however, do not appear to have been executed. The denunciation of them itself was, however, wrong; though it must be owned it proceeded from the best intentions on the side of Theodosius, who actually put none of his penal laws against sectaries into execution, and meant only to induce all men to speak alike in the church. How much better, to have taken pains in promoting the propagation of the Gospel itself by the encouragement of zealous pastors, and to have given up the zeal for a chimera of no value, a pretended union without the reality!

In the year 383, Amphilochius,† bishop of Iconium, coming to court with other bishops, paid the usual respects to the emperor, but took no notice of his son Arcadius, about six years old, who was near the father. Theodosius bade him salute his son. Amphilochius drew near, and stroking him, said, "God save you, my child."‡ The emperor in anger ordered the old man to be driven from court; who with a loud voice declared, "You cannot bear to have your son contemned; be assured, that God in like manner is offended with those who honour not his Son as himself." § The emperor was struck with the justness of the remark, and immediately made a law to prohibit the assemblies of the heretics.

The bishop of Iconium's behaviour at the emperor's court, A. D. 383.

In the same year the emperor Gratian lost his life by the

* Socrates, B. V. c. 10.
† [Theodoret. 5. c. 16. Soz. 7. c. 6.]
‡ [χαῖρε τέκνον.]
§ John v. 23.

rebellion of Maximus, who commanded in Britain. Deserted by his troops, Gratian fled towards Italy. He found the usual lot of the calamitous, a perfect want of friends; yet he might have escaped to the court of Milan, where his younger brother Valentinian reigned, if he had not been betrayed at Lyons. Adragathius invited him to a feast,* and swore to him upon the Gospel. The sincere mind of Gratian, measuring others by himself, and as yet not knowing the world (for he was but twenty-four years of age) fell into the snare, and his murder was the consequence. All writers agree, that he was of the best disposition, and well skilled both in religious and secular learning. Ambrose had a peculiar affection for him, and on his account wrote a treatise concerning the Deity of the Holy Ghost. He tells us (and every thing that we know of him confirms the account) that he was godly from his tender years. Chaste, temperate, benevolent, conscientious, he shines in the Church of Christ; but talents for government he seems not to have possessed, and his indolence gave advantage to those who abused both himself and the public. Divine Providence in him hath given us a lesson, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; even a prince unquestionably pious is denied the common advantage of a natural death.† When he was dying,‡ he bemoaned the absence of Ambrose, and often spake of him.§ Those who have received benefit from a pastor in divine things, have often an affection for him, of which the world has no idea. The last movements of a saint are absorbed in divine things, compared with which, the loss of empire weighed as nothing in the mind of Gratian.

Death of Gratian, A. D. 383.

* [Ambros. in Psalm. 61. § 23. vol. 2 p. 210.] † Fleury, b. xviii. 28.
‡ [Ambros. de obitu Valentinian. sect. 79.]
§ A charitable action of Ambrose, though in opposition to Gratian's views, tended no doubt to raise his character in the eyes of that emperor. A pagan of some rank had spoken contemptuously of Gratian, had been arraigned, and condemned to die. Ambrose, compassionating his case, went to court, to intercede for his life. It was with great difficulty that he could procure admission into the royal presence, where he prevailed at length, by his importunate solicitations, and saved the life of the condemned person. [Soz. 7. c. 25.]

CHAP. XIV.

THE HERESY OF PRISCILLIAN—THE CONDUCT OF MARTIN —THE PROGRESS OF SUPERSTITION.

I JOIN these subjects together, to connect the ecclesiastical information of Sulpicius Severus, an historian who belongs to this period, an Aquitanian of great learning, and who wrote a summary of Church history, which he extended to his own times. What he records of transactions which passed within his own memory, and also what he collected by information of other parts of the empire, may deserve to be very briefly reviewed. Very little shall we find adapted to our purpose; the deep decline of evangelical purity will be the chief discovery we shall make: and he will thus make my apology for evidencing so little of the spirit of Christianity at this period, because so little is to be found.

The Priscillianists, an heretical sect, who seem to have combined all the most pernicious heresies of former times, had already appeared in the time of Gratian, and infected the greatest part of Spain. Priscillian himself, whose character is described by the classical pen of Sulpicius with much elegance and energy,* was exactly fitted for the office which he filled: learned, eloquent, factious, acute, of great powers both of body and mind, and by a spurious modesty and gravity of manners, extremely well qualified to maintain an ascendancy over weak and credulous spirits. Idacius and Ithacius, the one an aged Presbyter, the other bishop of Sossuba, applied to the secular power, in order that, by the decrees of the magistrates, the heretics might be expelled from the cities. The Priscillianists endeavoured to gain friends in Italy; but their corruptions were too glaring to procure them any countenance either from Damasus of Rome, or from Ambrose of Milan.

On the death of Gratian, Maximus the usurper entered victorious into Treves. While Ithacius earnestly pressed him against the Priscillianists, the heresiarch himself appealed to Maximus, who took upon himself the office of deciding. Sulpicius very properly observes, that both parties were highly culpable; the heretics in spreading notions

* Sulp. Sev. p. 439.

entirely subversive of Christianity, and their accusers in subserving only their own factious and selfish views.

In the mean time, Martin, bishop of Tours, blamed Ithacius for bringing the heretics as criminals before the emperor, and entreated Maximus to abstain from the blood of the unhappy men: he said, it was abundantly sufficient, that having been judged heretics by the sentence of the bishops, they were expelled from the churches, and that it was a new and unheard of evil, for a secular judge to interfere in matters purely ecclesiastical. These were Christian sentiments; and deserve to be here mentioned, as describing an honest, though unsuccessful resistance made to the first attempt, which appeared in the church, of punishing heresy with death. I scarcely know any thing more disagreeable to the spirit of a really good man, than to think of punishing capitally, on account of their irreligion, persons who (as he is constrained to believe) are walking the broad road to eternal destruction. He has no need to enter into the political arguments against persecution, which are fashionable in the mouths of infidels. He has much more weighty reasons against it, drawn from the genius of his own religion. To do what in him lies to prevent the conversion of a sinner by shortening his days —how contrary is this to the spirit of Him, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them!

Yet there were found men at this time capable of such enormity, and it marks the degeneracy of the age. But Christ had still a church in the West, and Martin persevered with such pious zeal in opposing the hitherto unheard-of innovations, and was himself so much respected for his piety and integrity, that he prevailed at first, and the usurper promised, that he would not proceed to blood against the heretics. Two bishops, Magnus and Rufus, however, changed his resolution afterwards, and he referred the cause to Euodius the prefect, who, after he had found them guilty, (and they appear to have been defiled with all the impurities of the ancient Gnostics) committed them to custody, and referred them again to the emperor. Priscillian in the issue was put to death, and four other leaders of his sect. A few more were condemned to die, or to be banished. The heresy

Priscillian and four others put to death, A.D. 384.

was not extinguished by this means; for fifteen years after the contention was extreme between the parties; Priscillian was honoured as a martyr; Christianity never received a greater scandal, though, like all the rest, undeserved, from the mouths of its enemies; and men, who feared God, and loved moderation and charity, wept and prayed in secret, despised and disregarded by the two parties, who trampled on all the rules of godliness. In the mean time the selfish and worldly passions triumphed in Spain, and though the form of orthodoxy prevailed, it was evident that the power was reduced almost to the brink of destruction.

Let us attend to our business, and catch the face of the Church of Christ, if we can. We see her in Ambrose, who, coming to Maximus on an embassy from the younger Valentinian, refused to hold communion with his bishops, who had been concerned in the deaths of the heretics. Maximus, enraged, ordered him to withdraw. Ambrose entered upon his journey very readily, being only grieved to find an old bishop, Hyginus, dragged into exile, though it was evident that he was very near his end. The generous bishop of Milan applied to some of the courtiers, to furnish him with conveniences,* but in vain. A number of holy men, who protested against these barbarities, were themselves aspersed with the charge of heresy, and among the rest, Martin of Tours. Thus in Gaul and Spain there were three parties; first, the Priscillianists, men void of godliness evidently, and bearing the Christian name to disgrace it with a complication of heresies; secondly, men of formal orthodoxy, who persecuted the Priscillianists even to death, and ruined them as a sect, at the same time that they themselves disgraced the Gospel by a life of avarice, faction, and ambition; and thirdly, men who feared God and served him in the Gospel of his Son, condemning the principles of the former by argument only, and the practices of the latter by their meek and charitable conduct. A division of men, not uncommon in the Church of Christ; but let it be remembered, that the last sort are the true branches of the mystical vine, and that they only are to be regarded as belonging to our history.

Martin was born at Ticinum in Italy, and in his youth

* Ambrose, Ep. 27, or 24.

had served in the army under Constantius and Julian; but against his will. His father, by profession a soldier, had compelled him. For he himself, when only ten years old, went to the church, and gave in his name as a catechumen.* At twelve he had a desire to lead a monastic life. But being compelled to serve in the army, he was remarkable for his exemption from military vices, his liberality to the poor, and his reservation of nothing for himself out of the pay which he received, except what was necessary for daily food. At eighteen he was baptized, and two years afterwards left the army. Sometime after, falling into the hands of robbers among the Alps, he was delivered bound to one of them to be plundered, who, leading him to a retired place, asked him, who he was. He answered, "I am a Christian." "Are not you afraid?" "I never was more at ease, because I know the mercy of the Lord to be most present in trials: I am more concerned for you, who by your course of life render yourself unfit to partake of the mercy of Christ." And entering into the argument of religion, he preached the Gospel to the robber. The man believed, attended his instructor to the road, and begged his prayers. The new convert persevered in godliness; and [related to Sulpicius, his biographer, these particulars.]†

I must be brief in following our author through other parts of the life of his hero. It was an age of childish credulity; the human mind was sinking fast into ignorance and superstition. The Christian fathers and historians relate things extremely absurd; but this was the fault of the times, not of religion. The Pagan writers, their contemporaries, are no way their superiors. Few stories told by Sulpicius are so good in their matter, and so authentic in their foundation, as this of the robber. It was with difficulty that Martin was at length prevailed on to quit his monastery, and become bishop of Tours, to which office the universal voice of the people called him. He still preserved his monastic taste, and had a monastery two miles out of the city. Here he lived with eighty disciples, who followed his example; they lived in common with extreme austerity. The celebrity of his supposed miracles had a mighty effect on the ignorant Gauls; every common action

* A candidate for baptism. † Sulp. [de Vitâ Martin, p. 466.]

of his was magnified into a prodigy; heathen temples were destroyed, and churches and monasteries arose in their stead.

Maximus courted the friendship of Martin in vain, who honestly owned, that he could not countenance a murderer and usurper. Maximus pleaded necessity, the providence of God, and that he had slain none except in the field. Overcome at length by importunities, the bishop supped with the usurper. A servant offered the cup to Maximus, who directed him to give it to Martin, expecting and desiring to pledge him. The bishop disappointed his hopes, and gave it to his presbyter.

Wonderful is the account which Sulpicius gives of his patience and charity. But he speaks with partial affection, as of a friend, who in his eyes was faultless. The Scripture does not colour the characters of saints so highly; and I have no ambition to imitate Sulpicius. Many evils attend this spirit of exaggeration. The excessive admiration of men takes off the mind from looking to Jesus, the true and only Mediator. Sulpicius himself professes his hope of obtaining much good through the intercession of his deceased friend. What at first were only the more unguarded effusions of friendship, became at last habits of self-righteous superstition; and one of the worst corruptions of religion was this way gradually introduced, and in the end too firmly established.

Maximus, whatever were his motives, paid assiduous court to Martin, and together with his wife heard him discourse of divine things.* She indeed seems to have admired him sincerely, and asked her husband's consent, that she might be allowed as a servant to attend upon him at supper. It was done accordingly; and our author compares her on this account to the Queen of Sheba. In these transactions we may mark the progress of superstition.

The integrity of Martin appears very conspicuous in opposing the tyranny of Maximus. The latter strove in vain to reconcile him to the maxims of his government in the capital punishment of the Priscillianists, and endeavoured to persuade him to communicate with the bishops, who had been urgent in their condemnation. Martin refused, till, understanding that some of the king's servants were going

* [Sulpicii Severi Dial. 2. c. 7.]

to put certain persons to death for whom he had interceded, in order to save their lives he consented to communicate with men whose conduct he abhorred. Even of this compliance he bitterly repented, guarded against any future communion with the party of Ithacius, and lived afterwards sixteen years in retirement.

On the whole, if less had been said of his miracles, and a more distinct view had been given of his virtues, Martin of Tours would, I believe, appear among us far more estimable. That he was pious, is unquestionable; that his piety was disfigured with monastic superstition exceedingly, is no less evident; but Europe and Asia now vied with each other in the promotion of false humility, and I should be ashamed, as well as think the labour ill spent, to recite the stories at length which Sulpicius gives us.

CHAP. XV.

THE CONDUCT OF AMBROSE UNDER THE EMPEROR VALENTINIAN THE SECOND, AND THE PERSECUTION WHICH HE ENDURED FROM THE EMPEROR'S MOTHER JUSTINA.

JUSTINA, the empress, was a decided patroness of Arianism. After the death of her husband, she began openly to season her son with her doctrine, and to induce him to menace the bishop of Milan. Ambrose exhorted him to support the doctrine received from the Apostles. Young Valentinian, in a rage, ordered his guards to surround the church, and commanded Ambrose to come out of it. "I shall not willingly," replied the bishop, "give up the sheep of Christ to be devoured by wolves. You may use your swords and spears against me; such a death I shall freely undergo." * After this he was exposed to the various frauds and artifices of Justina, who feared to attack him openly. For the people were generally inclined to support the bishop; and his residence in the city where the court was held, at once increased his influence, and exercised his mind with a series of trials.

Ambrose persecuted, A.D. 385.

The Arians were not now the only adversaries of the Church: the Pagans themselves, taking advantage of the

* Theodoret, B. v. c. 13.

minority of Valentinian and the confusions of the empire, endeavoured to recover their ancient establishment. The Senate of Rome consisted still very much of Gentiles; and the pride of family grandeur still induced the most noble to pique themselves on their constancy, and to scorn the innovations of Christianity. Symmachus, a man of learning and great powers of eloquence, headed the party, and endeavoured to persuade the emperor to suffer the altar of Victory to be restored to the Senate-house. Ambrose wrote to Valentinian, that it ill became the Gentiles to complain of their losses, who never spared the blood of Christians, and who refused them, under Julian, the common liberty of teaching. "If he is a Pagan who gives you this advice, let him give the same liberty which he takes himself. You compel no man to worship what he does not approve.—Here the whole Senate, so far as it is Christian, is endangered. Every senator takes his oath at the altar; every person who is obliged to appear before the senate upon oath, takes his oath in the same manner. The divinity of the false gods is evidently allowed by the practice. And Christians are obliged by these means to endure a persecution. But in matters of religion consult with God; and whatever men may say of injuries which they suffer, remember that you injure no man by preferring God Almighty before him." * We have still extant the address of Symmachus to the emperors on the subject in vindication of Pagan idolatry, in which he introduces Rome as a person complaining of the hardships to which she was exposed in her old age. We have also the reply of Ambrose, who introduces Rome observing, that it was not by the favour of these gods that she gained her victories. In answer to the complaint, which the Pagans made of the loss of their revenues, he observes, that the Gospel had increased by poverty and ill-treatment, whereas riches and prosperity seemed necessary to the very existence of THEIR religion. [sect. 11.] And now that the Church has some wealth, he justly glories in the use she made of it, and challenges the Pagans to declare, what captives THEY had redeemed, what poor THEY had relieved, and to what exiles THEY [sect 17.]

* Epistle of Ambrose, 30, [or 17, this is a tolerably long letter in the original, the above being only a few sentences extracted from it.]

had sent alms. But it is not necessary to enlarge on this subject. The advantage of the Christian cause in the promotion of liberality and benevolence among mankind, above all religions, is perhaps the only thing generally allowed even by infidels. Symmachus being foiled at present, renewed the same attempt before the emperor Theodosius, and was vanquished a second time by the eloquence and influence of Ambrose.

This prelate by his talents in negotiation at the court of Maximus, averted for a time the invasion of Italy from the court of Milan. But nothing could move the mind of Justina in his favour. In the year 386, she procured a law to enable the Arian congregations to assemble without interruption.

Justina's law. A. D. 386.

Auxentius, a Scythian, of the same name with the Arian predecessor of Ambrose, was now introduced, under the protection of the empress, into Milan. He challenged Ambrose to hold a disputation with him in the emperor's court; which occasioned the bishop to write to Valentinian, that it was no part of the emperor's business to decide in points of doctrine.* "Let [them] come to church," says he, "and upon hearing, let the people judge for themselves; and if they like Auxentius better, let them take him: but they have already declared their sentiments." More violent measures were now entered into, and the fortitude of Ambrose was tried in a manner which he had hitherto not experienced. Auxentius moved, that a party of soldiers might be sent to secure for himself the possession of the church: and tribunes came to demand it, with the plate and vessels belonging to it. At the same time, there were those who represented, that it was an unreasonable thing, that the emperor should not be allowed to have one place of worship which was agreeable to his conscience. The language was specious, but deceitful. Justina and her son, if they had thought it prudent to exert their authority, might have commanded the use not of one only, but of all the churches: but the demand of the court was, that Ambrose should do what in conscience he could not, that he should, by his own deed, resign the church into Arian hands, which, as circumstances then stood, would have been to acknowledge, indi-

* Epistle of Ambrose, 32, [or 21.]

rectly at least, the Arian creed. He therefore calmly answered the officers, that if the emperor had sent to demand his house or land, money or goods, he would have freely resigned them, but that he could not deliver that which was committed to his care. In the congregation he that day told the people,* that he would not willingly desert his right: that if compelled, he knew not how to resist. "I can grieve," says he, "I can weep, I can groan. Against arms and soldiers, tears are my arms. Such are the fortifications of a pastor. I neither can nor ought to resist in any other manner. Our Lord Jesus is Almighty, [this is our belief and therefore] what he commands to be done shall be fulfilled, nor does it become you to resist the divine sentence." It seemed proper to state in his own words what his conduct was; and it appears that he abated nothing of the maxims of passive submission to the civil power, which Christians had ever practised from the days of St. Paul, and that there is not the least ground to accuse Ambrose of disloyalty to his prince. He had served him already faithfully, and we shall see presently that he is again ready to expose himself to danger for his service. The court knew his principles, and seem not to have had the least fear that he should draw the people into a rebellion; but they wished to menace him into a degree of compliance with Arianism.

Ambrose during the suspension of this affair employed the people in singing divine hymns and psalms, at the end of which there was a solemn doxology to the honour of the Trinity. The method of responsive singing had been [generally] practised in the East, and was introduced by Ambrose into Milan, whence it was propagated into all the churches. The people were much delighted, their zeal for the doctrine of the Trinity was inflamed,† and one of the best judges in the world, who then lived at Milan, owns that his own soul was melted into divine affection on these occasions.‡

The demands of the court were now increased: not only the Portian church which stood without the walls, but also the great church newly built within the city, were required

* Orat. in Auxent. p. 159. Paris edition, [or Vol. iv. p. 273. ed. 1836.]
† [Orat. in Auxent. § 34. Vol. iv. p. 279.]
‡ Aug. Conf. B. ix. [c. 7. Vol. i. p. 192.]

to be given up. On the Lord's day after sermon, the catechumens being dismissed, Ambrose went [to explain the Christian faith to some who were candidates for baptism,]* when he was told that officers were sent from the court to the Portian church: he went on, however, unmoved in the service, till he was told, that the people having met with Castulus an Arian presbyter in the street, had laid hands on him. Then with prayers and tears he besought God, that no man's blood might be shed, but rather his own, not only for the pious people, but also for the wicked. And he immediately sent some presbyters and deacons, who recovered Castulus safe from the tumult. The court, enraged, sent out warrants for apprehending several merchants and tradesmen; men were put in chains, and vast sums of money were required to be paid in a little time, which many professed they would pay cheerfully, if they were suffered to enjoy the profession of their faith unmolested. By this time the prisons were full of tradesmen, and the magistrates and men of rank were severely threatened; while the courtiers urged Ambrose with the imperial authority; whom he answered with the same loyalty and firmness as before. [Ambrose returned to his house for the night that he might be ready if they came to apprehend him; the Arians, having few friends among the people, kept themselves within doors. In the morning, Ambrose, going again to the church, found it equally crowded, though surrounded by soldiers in arms, and taking the temptations of Job, that being the Scripture portion for the day, as his subject, he applied it to their present circumstances. Job (said he) has, as it were re-appeared in each of you, the patience and fortitude of that holy man have again shone forth in their brightness, for what more resolute or more appropriate could be said by christians than that which the Holy Spirit has spoken in you this day; WE ENTREAT, EMPEROR, BUT WE DO NOT FIGHT, WE ARE NOT AFRAID, BUT WE ENTREAT.] A notary coming to the bishop from the emperor, asked him, whether he intended to usurp the empire? "I have an empire," says he, "it is true, but it lies in weakness, according to that saying of the Apostle,

* [Tradere symbolum aliquibus competentibus. See Bingham's Antiquities. B. x. c. 2.]

'when I am weak, then am I strong.' Even Maximus will clear me of this charge, since he will confess, it was through my embassy he was kept from the invasion of Italy."— Wearied and overcome at length with his resolution, the court, who meant to obtain his consent, rather than to exercise violence, ordered the guards to leave the church, where the bishop had lodged all night; the soldiers having guarded it so close, that none had been suffered to go out; and the people confined there having spent their time in singing psalms. The sums exacted of the tradesmen also were restored. Peace was made for the present, though Ambrose had still reason to fear for himself, and expressed his desire, in the epistle which he wrote to his sister Marcellina, that God would defend his church, and let its enemies rather satiate their rage with his blood.*

The spirit of devotion was kept up all this time among the people, and Ambrose was indefatigable both in praying and preaching. Being called on by the people to consecrate a new church, he told them, that he would, if he could find any relics of martyrs there. Let us not make the superstition of these times greater than it was. It was lamentably great: enough to stain the piety with which it was mixed. We are told, that it had been revealed to him in a vision at night, in what place he might find the relics.† But in the epistle which he writes on the subject, he says no such thing. He describes, however, the finding of the bodies of two martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius, the supposed miracles wrought on the occasion, the dedication of the church, the triumph of the orthodox, and the confusion of Arianism. Ambrose himself too much encouraged all this, and in a language which favoured the introduction of other intercessors besides the Lord Jesus Christ, whom yet it is evident he supremely loved, and trusted in for salvation. In all this, the candid and intelligent reader will see the conflict between godliness and superstition maintained in the church of Milan, both existing in some vigour, and each at present checking the growth of the other.‡

The news of Maximus's intention to invade Italy arriving at this time, threw the court of Milan into the greatest tre-

* Epis. 33. [or 20.] † [Augustin. Confess. l. ix. c. 7. § 16. Vol. i. p. 192.]
‡ Ib. 85. [or 22.]

pidation. Again Justina implored the bishop to undertake an embassy to the usurper, which he cheerfully undertook, and executed with great fortitude; but it was not in his power to stop the progress of the enemy. Theodosius, who reigned in the East, coming at length to the assistance of Valentinian, put an end to the usurpation and the life of Maximus. By his means, the young emperor was induced to forsake his mother's principles, and in form at least to embrace those of Ambrose. Whether he was ever truly converted to God, is not so clear. That he was reconciled to Ambrose, and loved him highly, is certain: and in the year 392, in which he lost his life by a second usurpation in the West, he sent for Ambrose to come to baptize him. The bishop in his journey heard of his death, with which he was deeply affected, and wrote to Theodosius * concerning him with all the marks of sorrow, and composed a funeral oration in his praise. The rhetorical spirit usually exaggerates on these occasions; but it is inconsistent with the unquestionable integrity of Ambrose to suppose, that he did not believe the real conversion of his royal pupil. The oration itself is by no means worthy of Ambrose; the taste is vicious and affected. Indeed panegyric, when it has not an object of magnitude sufficient to fill the mind, is ever frigid and grovelling, because it is continually affecting the sublime, but has not materials to support it with dignity.

The tyrant Maximus defeated, and killed by Theodosius, A. D. 388.

Valentinian sends for Ambrose to baptize him, A. D. 392.

CHAP. XVI.

THE CHURCH UNDER THEODOSIUS.

It will be proper to look a little more particularly at the conduct of this prince towards the Church. He had been preserved in his younger years from the jealousy of Valens, who, by some superstition, had been led to suspect those, whose names began with THE,† and to seek their destruction. After his exaltation to the empire from a private life by the generous and patriotic choice of Gratian, he reigned

* Epist. 34. [or 53.] *and* de obitu Valentiniani. † [Socrat. iv. c. 19.]

in the East, more vigorously supporting Christianity, according to his ideas of it, than any emperor before him. His sense of justice, however, determined him to order some Christians to rebuild at their own expense a Jewish synagogue, which they had tumultuously pulled down. I mention with concern, yet with historical veracity, that Ambrose prevailed on him to set aside this sentence, from a mistaken notion of piety, that Christianity should not be obliged to contribute to the erection of a Jewish synagogue. If the Jews were tolerated at all in the empire, the transaction ought certainly to have been looked on as a civil one. This is the first instance I recollect in which a good man was induced, by superstitious motives, to break the essential rules of justice; and it marks the growth of superstition.* Nor is there any thing in the declamatory eloquence of Ambrose, which moves me to pass a different judgment.

The Luciferians still existing, entreated this emperor, to grant them liberty of conscience; confessing themselves to be Christians, and contending that it was wrong in others to give them a sectarian name; at the same sime declaring that they coveted not the riches and grandeur of other churches, and in their censures not sparing Hilary of Poictiers and Athanasius.† These last were doubtless men of great uprightness and integrity. What they themselves were is not so evident as it were to be wished, because of the scantiness of information. They speak with extraordinary respect of Gregory, bishop of Elvira, as the chief of their communion; a man doubtless of high estimation, because Theodosius himself admits it, and grants them a legal toleration. I have before spoken of this class of dissenters, among whom, I apprehend, it is probable, marks of the presence of God might be found, if their history had come down to us. But the reader who knows how slight our information of these things is, while church history dwells chiefly on what is scandalous, not what is excellent, will not be surprised at my silence. The sect itself vanished soon after.

Theodosius was of a passionate temper, and on a particular occasion was led by it to commit a barbarous action; the circumstances of the story will be the best comment on the character of this emperor, of Ambrose, and of the

* Epis. 29. [or 40.] † [Gennad. liber de vir. illust. c. 16.]

times.* At Thessalonica a tumult was made by the populace, and the emperor's officer was murdered. The news was calculated to try the temper of Theodosius, who ordered the sword to be let loose upon them. Ambrose interceded, and the emperor promised to forgive. But the great officers of the court persuaded him to retract, and to sign a warrant for military execution. It was executed with great cruelty. Seven thousand were massacred in three hours, without trial, and without distinction!

Ambrose † wrote him a faithful letter, reminding him of the charge in the prophecy, that if the priest does not warn the wicked he shall be answerable for it.‡ "You discover a zeal," says he, "for the faith and fear of God, I own: but your temper is warm, soon to be appeased indeed, if endeavours are used to calm it; but if not regulated it bears down all before it." He urges the example of David, and shows the impropriety of communicating with him at present. "I love you," says he, "I cherish you, I pray for you; but blame not me if I give the preference to God." On these principles Ambrose refused to admit Theodosius into the church of Milan. The emperor pleaded the case of David. "Imitate him," says the zealous bishop, "in his repentance, as well as in his sin." Theodosius submitted, and kept from the church eight months. On the feast of the Nativity, he expressed his sorrow with sighs and tears in the presence of Ruffinus the [controller of the household.]§ "I weep," said he, "that the temple of God, and consequently heaven, is shut from me, which is open to slaves and beggars." Ruffinus undertook to persuade the bishop to admit the emperor. Ambrose urged the impropriety of his rude interference, because Ruffinus, by his evil counsels, had been the author of the massacre. Ruffinus telling him that the emperor was coming, "I will hinder him," says he, "from entering the vestibule; yet if he will play the king, I shall [receive death with pleasure.] Ruffinus informed the emperor; "I will go, and receive the rebuke which I deserve," says he. And as he approached the bishop, he added, "I come to offer myself, to submit to what you prescribe." Ambrose enjoined him

* [Soz. vii. c. 25. Theodoret. [illegible] Ambros. c. 24.]
† Amb. Epis. 51. [illegible] b. v. c. 18.

to do public penance, and to suspend the execution of capital warrants for thirty days in future, in order that the ill effects of intemperate anger might be prevented, [and on his readily assenting pronounced his absolution.] The emperor, pulling off his imperial robes,* prayed prostrate on the pavement, nor did he put on those robes, till the time of his penance was expired. "My soul cleaveth to the dust," said he, "quicken thou me, according to thy word." The people prayed and wept with him, and he not only complied with the rules of penance, but retained visible marks of compunction and sadness during the rest of his life.

Let us make as candid an estimate, as we can, of this extraordinary affair: I say, as we can. Moderns hardly can be sufficiently candid; so different are our sentiments and views. It is certain that these rules of humiliation are too severe, too formal, and by no means properly calculated to instruct: the growth also of superstition, and the immoderate exercise of episcopal power, are both strikingly evident. But what then? Was Theodosius a mean abject prince, and Ambrose a haughty or hypocritical pontiff? Neither the one nor the other is true. The general life of the former evinces him a great and wise prince, who had the true fear of God before his eyes; and the latter thought he did no more than what the office, which he bore, required; and his affectionate regard for the emperor, and sincere concern for his soul, appear evident. On the whole, the discipline itself thus magnanimously exercised by Ambrose, and humbly submitted to by Theodosius, when stripped of its superstitions and formalities, was salutary. Who does not see, that the contempt of discipline in our days, among the great, has proved extremely pernicious to the interests of practical religion?

After the murder of Valentinian,† a person named Eugenius usurped the empire of the West, who again erected the altar of Victory, and encouraged the Pagans; but their hopes were of short duration. Theodosius soon stripped him of his life and power, and thus became sole master of the Roman world. Under his authority the ex-

* [Ambros. de obitu Theodos. sect. 34.]
† [Philostorg. Hist. xi. c. 2. Paulin. in vit. Ambros. c. 26.]

tirpation of idolatry was carried on with more decisive vigour than ever. At Alexandria the votaries of the renowned temple of Serapis made an insurrection, and murdered a number of Christians.* The emperor, being informed of this, declared that he would not suffer the glory of their martyrdom to be stained with any executions, and that he was determined to pardon the murderers in hopes of their conversion, but that the temples, the cause of so much mischief, should be destroyed. There was a remarkable image of Serapis in the temple, of which it had been confidently given out, that if any man touched it, the earth would open, the heaven be dissolved, and all things run back into a general chaos.† A soldier however, animated by Theophilus the bishop, was so hardy as to make the experiment. With an axe he cleft him down the jaws; an army of mice fled out at the breach he had made; and Serapis was hacked in pieces. On the destruction of idolatry in Egypt, it happened that the Nile did not overflow so plentifully, as it had been wont to do. It is, said the Pagans, because it is affronted at the prevailing impiety; it has not been worshipped with sacrifice,‡ as it is used to be. Theodosius, being informed of this, declared like a man who believed in God, and preferred heavenly things to earthly; "We ought to prefer our duty to God to the streams of the Nile, and the cause of piety to the fertility of the country; let the Nile never flow again, rather than idolatry be encouraged." The event afforded a fine comment on our Saviour's words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you." The Nile returned to its course, and rose above the highest mark, which, at other times, it seldom reached. The Pagans, overcome in argument, made use of ridicule, the great sanctuary of profaneness, and cried out in their theatres, that the old doting god was grown so weak, that he could not hold his water. Numbers, however, made a more serious use of the remarkable Providence, and Egypt forsook the superstition, in which for so many ages it had been involved. And thus the country which had nourished idolatry more early

* [Soz. vii. c. 15. Socrat. v. c. 16.] † [Theodoret, v. c. 22.]

‡ Sozom.

and more passionately than others, was made the special scene of the triumphs of God and his Christ.

Libanius, the friend of Julian, was yet alive, and held the office of Pretorian prefect under the emperor. The gentleness of this prince encouraged the sophist to present him with an oration in favour of the temples; in which he trode in the steps of Symmachus, and pleaded the cause of the gods, as well as so bad a subject would admit. It is remarkable, that he argued, "Religion ought to be planted in men's minds by reason, not by force." Thus Pagans could now talk, who for ages had acted toward Christians in so different a manner. The writer of this oration was himself a palpable instance of the clemency of Christian governors compared with Pagan. He lived in a respectable situation, unmolested, the champion of expiring Paganism; and many others were treated in the same manner.

Coming to Rome, the zealous emperor in a deliberate speech endeavoured to persuade the senate, very many of whom still patronized idolatry, to embrace the Christian faith, as the only religion which taught men how to obtain pardon of sin, and holiness of life. The Gentile part of them declared, that they would not give up a religion, under which Rome had prospered for near twelve hundred years. Theodosius told them, that he saw no reason, why he should maintain their religion, and that he would not only cease to furnish the expense out of the exchequer, but abolish the sacrifices themselves. The senators complained, that the neglect of the rites was the grand cause, why the empire declined so much: a specious argument, well calculated to gain upon worldly minds, and which had great effect on many Pagans at this time. We may see by and bye, what a laboured and animated answer to it was written by one of the greatest and ablest of the fathers. Theodosius now made it a capital crime to sacrifice, or attend the Pagan rites. In vain did the patrons of idolatry exercise their parts and assiduity. The emperor was determined, and issued out a law that made it treasonable to offer sacrifice, or to consult the entrails of beasts.* Incense and perfumes were likewise forbidden. Paganism never lifted up its head after this; habit alone supported it; and

* Cave's Introduction to the Lives of the Fathers, Vol. ii.

objects of sense being removed, zeal was extinguished; and as Theodosius was not disposed to make martyrs, so no Pagans felt any inclination to become such. This great prince expired at Milan in the year 395, about sixty years of age, having reigned sixteen years. And the century before us nearly closes with the full establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire. The religion which was of God made its way through all opposition; that which was of man, supported only by power and custom, failed to thrive, as soon as it lost the ascendant, and within a generation it ceased almost universally to exist among men.

Death of Theodosius A.D. 395.

The real character of Theodosius is by no means doubtful. For though the praises of Ambrose may be suspected, yet Aurelius Victor,* a Gentile writer, must be credited, when he commends this emperor. His clemency, liberality and generosity were admirable. He was brave and successful in war; but his wars were forced upon him. He was an enemy to drunkenness, and was himself a model of gravity, temperance and chastity in private life. By a law he forbade minstrels and other servants of lewdness to attend at feasts. Thus he is represented by a contemporary, whose account is certainly to be preferred to that of a later writer, the partial Zosimus, who treats every Christian emperor with malignity. I see in Theodosius the triumphs of the Cross; nor in all the Pagan history of the emperors was there one to be compared with him. They had no principles to produce humility. The excess of anger was, as we have seen, his predominant evil; and his case teaches at once two lessons: one is, that the best men need to guard daily against their besetting sins; and the other is, that even our infirmities may be turned to good account by the promotion of our humility, and the Redeemer's glory.

Flaccilla, the wife of Theodosius, appears to have been a pious and humble person. She was constantly reminding him of the private and low condition, in which they had lived together before his advancement, and exhorting him to attend to the duties of religion. She herself was an

* [Sext. Aurel. Vict. Epit. p. 282, &c. (ed. Delph) compared with Zosim. Hist. l. iv. c. 33.]

edifying pattern of condescension and liberality. The sick, the afflicted, the poor, were relieved not only by her alms, but also by her benevolent attention and labour. Some representing to her, that it was beneath her dignity to take care of hospitals and the houses of mourning, she answered, "The distribution of gold indeed becomes the imperial dignity; but I offer to him, who hath given me that dignity, my personal labours as a token of gratitude." That grace is strong indeed, which melts not under the beams of prosperity. Theodosius was once inclined to converse with Eunomius, an able Arian, who lived at Constantinople, and whom, on account of his heretical practices, he banished thence. But Flaccilla, who trembled for the salvation of her husband, (I speak seriously what Mr. Gibbon does scornfully, chap. XXVII. vol. III.) dissuaded him from it. It is pleasant to see orthodox profession consistently united with virtuous practice; this can only be the case where men are taught of God indeed. It ought to be known, that the emperor, who in the cause of God never yielded a tittle to heresy, in his own cause was soft and flexible, and with princely liberality supported the aged mother, and brought up the orphan daughters, of the usurper Maximus.

CHAP. XVII.

REFLECTIONS ON ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

"But what right had Theodosius to make his religion that of the state? Ought not every person, in this matter, to be left to his own conscience? Is it not a violation of the right of private judgment, to impose religious sentiments on the subjects of any government? How therefore can Theodosius, or others who have acted like him, be cleared from the charge of exercising tyrannical authority."

There was a time when the fallacy of such notions would have been seen through with less difficulty: at present, the tide of popular opinion runs strongly in their favour, and it becomes more necessary to examine their foundation. Moreover, the characters of many of the brightest and best Christians are so interwoven in this

question, and the determination of it so much affects the honour of the Divine operations in the propagation of Christianity, that the reader, I trust, will be disposed to receive these reflections with candour and attention, however defective they may appear to him in some respects, or inadequate to the solution of several difficulties, which may be conceived to belong to this intricate subject.

I shall take for granted, that the Gospel is of divine authority, and ought to be received, on pain of condemnation, by every one, who has the opportunity of hearing it fairly proposed; and that a man ought no more to plead the pretence of conscience for rejecting its fundamentals, than for the commission of murder, theft, or any other criminal action. The reason is, because its light and evidences do so unquestionably carry the impression of divine goodness and divine authority, that wickedness of heart, and not weakness of capacity, must be the cause of the rejection of it by any man. I send those, who are inclined to dispute these positions, to the many proofs given of them by the best evangelical writers in all ages, and above all to the Scriptures themselves, which every where declare, that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."* If the reader bear these things in memory, he will find some of the most specious objections to ecclesiastical establishments overturned.

For, few persons will, I think, dispute the principle of general expediency and utility, as directly applicable to this important subject. Has not every state a right to ordain what is conducive to its preservation and the good of society? And, for these purposes, is any thing to be compared with right religion and the fear of God? What shall hinder, then, but that the state has the same right to make laws concerning religion, as concerning property, commerce and agriculture? Is it not a great mistake to separate religious considerations from civil? And while you attempt to do so in theory, will it not be found impossible in practice? And should not laws be always made for practice, and not for mere speculation? The more the governors feel the importance of religion, (I speak not now

* John iii. 36.

for the next life, but for this,) the more concerned will they be to establish it. They must do so, if they regard even the temporal good of their subjects.

Then, briefly, these three considerations, namely, 1st, the clear evidences by which Christianity is supported: 2ndly, the importance of its doctrines; and, 3dly, general expediency, appear to me to supply materials for an argument in favour of ecclesiastical establishments, which admits of no satisfactory answer. Thus: the Gospel is of divine authority: its fundamentals are revealed with so much clearness, and are of so much consequence to the interests of mankind, that they cannot be rejected without great wickedness of heart; even the wrath of God is declared to abide on him who believeth not the Son. Under these circumstances, will any man, who thinks it the duty of the supreme power to consult the good of the community, believe it a matter of indifference, whether suitable forms of prayer and thanksgiving, or in short, whether a convenient and well-digested Liturgy,* founded on the genuine principles of revealed religion, be composed for public use, and also whether proper persons and places be provided by the state, for the worship of God and for the instruction of the people?

But besides these general reasons for a national establishment of true religion, there are other considerations relative to the same subject, which merit our attention.

It is certain, that from the earliest ages and under patriarchal government, when holy men were favoured with divine revelations, governors taught the true religion, and did not permit their subjects to propagate atheism, idolatry or false religion.† Abraham, Isaac,‡ and Jacob§ governed their families in this manner: so did Noah before them.‖ As families grew into nations, the same practical ideas prevailed. At length, when it pleased God to select one nation for his service, the same senti-

* In such undertakings, the general aim, undoubtedly, ought to be, not to gratify this or that party in unreasonable demands; but to do that, which most tends to the preservation of peace and unity in the church; the procuring of reverence and exciting of piety and devotion in the public worship of God; and the taking away of occasion from them that seek occasion of cavil or quarrel against the liturgy of the church. See the preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

‡ Gen. xxviii. 1. § Gen. xxxv. 2. ‖ Gen. viii. 20.

ments respecting church-establishments continued, whether kings, or judges, or priests, were in possession of the executive power. I am aware that the Jewish government was a THEOCRACY, and that it has therefore many things peculiar to itself; but so much perhaps may safely be inferred from its constitution, that it is lawful for the sovereign authority to make regulations for the support of true religion. It is hardly to be conceived, that God would interweave into his theocracy, what in its own nature is unlawful.

Nor is this argument, which depends upon the general administration of ecclesiastical affairs in the Jewish theocracy, much weakened by any conclusions that may be drawn from particular instances of Divine interference and direction which occur in the history of the same theocracy. When the Jews are ordered to extirpate the Canaanites, and when Agag is hewed in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal, these are occasional instances of Divine vengeance exercised against iniquity: we may readily admit, that such instances form no lawful precedents for governments to follow, while we maintain, that a mode of ecclesiastical administration ordained by God, and continued for a long series of years, cannot possibly be an improper example for religious magistrates to imitate. However, in contending for the lawfulness of such imitation, I would by no means be understood to include all the particular actions or measures of Jewish governors in ecclesiastical matters; the reasons of these actions or measures may have long since ceased to exist. In this argument I have respect only, in general, to the principal feature of the Jewish constitution, namely, the unquestionable authority, which the magistrate possessed in ecclesiastical regulations: a very remarkable fact! which I recommend to the serious consideration of those Dissenters from our church-establishment, who do not hesitate to pronounce the interference of the civil magistrate in the religious institutions of a nation to be always unlawful.

If these reasons and examples be well weighed, it will hardly be doubted, but that when the Gospel was preached among the Jews, if their Sanhedrim had received it, they would have had a right to make it the established religion

of the nation. They might have said, and they probably would have said, "This religion is true and divine; the people cannot reject it without rejecting, in positive wickedness of heart, the authority of God himself: the doctrines of this religion are of the utmost importance: it is therefore expedient, that it should be supported by the state, and we are countenanced in this conclusion by the example of our ancestors."

And in regard to such modern nations, as profess to believe the Scripture-history of the Jews and of Jesus Christ, it may fairly be asked, What are the peculiar circumstances, that should render it improper for the governing powers to feel the influence of the same reasons and examples? Can any good argument be invented to prove, that, in the momentous affair of religion, they ought not to be actuated by the grand principle of general expediency, when, in matters of less consequence, they evidently show themselves to be so actuated, and no one disputes the propriety of their conduct?

If an inferior state should fear the displeasure of a superior one in its neighbourhood, which might have sufficient strength to destroy it, will any man deny to the supreme power of this lesser state a right to prescribe to its own subjects a mode of conduct that should not give umbrage to the greater? If no man will deny this, let the concession be applied to religion: Irreligion and idolatry provoke the Almighty; a nation wholly given up to them has reason to fear his vengeance, especially if they persist in sinful practices against light and the fairest means of instruction. Then let the magistrate act consistently: let him only adhere to the acknowledged principle, that the government ought to promote the good of the state, and the reader sees the CONSEQUENCE. Indeed I do not perceive how the consequence can be avoided, unless it be clearly shown, that there is something in the history of mankind, which should lead us to suspect the soundness of this reasoning. But the practice of holy men of old in different ages, and the history of the earliest nations, and of the Jews, have been proved to be all in favour of religious establishments.

But perhaps we may be called upon in this place to

explain a little more distinctly the meaning and extent of that CONSEQUENCE, which we have affirmed to be unavoidable: we may be asked, whether we mean to conclude, that civil magistrates possess an authority, not only by which they may prescribe and support a national establishment of religion, but also by which they may COMPEL the subject to receive the religion which they have instituted, and restrain him from practising his own religion, if he happen to think differently from the powers that be. And then a further question will be asked, whether this be not to encourage persecution, and to exercise a tyranny over the conscience?

Without pretending to satisfy completely either these inquiries, or others of a similar nature that may easily be imagined, I endeavour to separate what is certain and important in this matter from what is doubtful and of less moment: I say without the least hesitation: Let no man be compelled to become a Christian; in strict truth, he cannot. Every man not only ought to have, but must have, the right of private judgment. And as it is the absolute duty of Christian states, even for social and political purposes, to endeavour as much as possible to convert all their subjects to the true religion, so it is contrary to duty, that men should be forced to profess what they do not believe, because hypocrisy will be the certain, and an augmented enmity the probable, consequence. It is one thing, however, to leave a man at liberty, whether he will be a believer or not, another to allow him to propagate infidelity and idolatry. So also it is one thing to violate conscience by absolutely insisting on and extorting confessions of faith; another to preserve the sacred institutions of the country from being derided and profaned. The government has a right to restrain men, and oblige them to keep their irreligion to themselves; the same right as to oblige vessels to perform quarantine, when there is reason to suspect the plague. In this manner acted the great, the pious, Theodosius; he compelled no man; he only restrained. Pagan emperors before him, and Popish princes since, not only restrained, but also compelled. The former is not persecution, the latter is; and I join cordially with the present age in detesting it.

Strange as this conclusion may appear to some, who have been habituated to another mode of thinking, I seem to be supported, not only by the general arguments which have been already advanced, but by the positive word of God. Job declares, that idolatry was an iniquity to be punished by the Judge.* He evidently speaks what was confessed by all to be just: nor is it to be conceived, that the Holy Ghost would have suffered him to impose an iniquitous sentiment on the reader in that manner. I repeat it; the general arguments drawn from expediency, and the example of the Jews, appear to me to justify the civil magistrate, not only in instituting and supporting ecclesiastical establishments, but also in restraining and punishing the propagators of irreligious opinions. For can any thing be more plain, than that if public utility require a provision to be made for the worship of God, and the instruction of the people in true religion, the same utility will require, that every thing should be suppressed which has a tendency to destroy the efficacy of that provision, or diminish its influence? And on these principles acted the good kings, judges, and priests of Israel, in abundance of instances.

Thus, by steps, which to such as have a real reverence for revealed religion, will probably appear neither tedious nor obscure, are we arrived at several conclusions of the utmost consequence in practice.

1. The supreme power has no right to violate liberty of conscience, by extorting confessions of faith.

2. It has a right—To establish the true religion, by positive institutions:

3. To ensure public respect to these institutions by penal laws:

4. To restrain and punish the propagators of irreligious opinions.

But it must not be dissembled, that the 4th conclusion contains a proposition in some measure undefined, and involved in difficulties, which require further discussion. Who shall determine, to what extent the authority of the supreme magistrate reaches, in the suppression of irreligious opinions? Where shall we find a common arbiter between him and the people, when they differ in their notions? Or, is the

* Job xxxi. 28.

magistrate permitted to restrain and punish the propagators of every sentiment that happens to clash with the tenets, which he has introduced into his establishment?

It is much to be wished, that persons whose principles and habits incline them to give, in some respects, different answers to these inquiries, would, in the first place seriously endeavour to find out, how far they actually think alike, and by so doing come nearer to a mutual agreement, rather than embitter their tempers by acrimonious disputes concerning inferior matters, widen the breach of Christian friendship, and keep entirely out of sight the more important considerations, in which their judgments might have concurred. Sincere Christians of every denomination, who have duly weighed the arguments contained in this chapter, would then, I think, be disposed to admit that the propagators of infidelity, of idolatry, of atheism, and in short of gross irreligion, ought to be effectually restrained and punished by the civil magistrate; and if this be admitted, if men of every station heartily join in this conclusion, the existing laws against irreligion will be vigorously executed, and a great practical point will be gained.

Moreover, it would soon be agreed, that in matters of subordinate consequence, which are evidently not essential to Christianity, the civil magistrate ought not to interfere at all, by restraining or punishing such persons as differ from the establishment, but that he should suffer them to enjoy a complete toleration, and to serve God in their own way.

The essentials of Christianity ought, in my judgment, to be effectually protected by the laws, against the profane and libellous attacks of infidels of every denomination. I do not think it sufficient to say "The truth will take care of itself." The unlearned and the unwary ought not to be exposed to the mischievous effects of such publications. Nevertheless, I am sensible that on this head it seems impossible to define the limits of the authority of the magistrate so precisely, as to exclude all doubt and ambiguity. For, besides that questions will sometimes arise even respecting the essentials themselves, the expediency of the punishment will frequently depend on peculiar circumstances.

There is a great difference, for example, between a serious inquirer after truth, and one who makes a mock of religion;

between the man, who proposes his doubts with modesty, and wishes to have them removed, and the profane sceptic or infidel, who, under the pretence of candour and fair investigation, secretly rejoices in disseminating objections, and in undermining the faith of unguarded unbelievers. Add to this; it will not always be prudent to punish even those, who openly and scandalously attack the established religion of the country. In many cases, it will be much better to pass by the impudent offender with contempt, than, by inflicting the penalty he has justly incurred, to excite the curiosity of the public, to make the libellous publication more known, and to render its unworthy author of more consequence.

It is not to be expected, that all should think alike. Let Christian fundamentals therefore be preserved as effectually as possible by an ecclesiastical establishment, and by laws which defend and support it; let there be a toleration for those who profess themselves to hold the essentials of Christianity, but may not think themselves authorised in conscience to conform, in all points, to the established church: This is not only allowable, but perfectly just and equitable. To deny it, is tyranny. Thus acted Theodosius with respect to the Novatians: and this seems the utmost limit of human wisdom in this difficult subject.

The advantages of a Christian establishment are doubtless great: the prevention of general profaneness, the decent observation of the Sabbath, and the opportunity of diffusing the Gospel in dark and barbarous regions; all these things were the evident good consequences of the establishment during the fourth century. But let us suppose, that Constantine and his successors had contented themselves with encouraging the Gospel, and had permitted idolatry and irreligion to continue unchecked. Considering the depravity of human nature, one sees not how, without a miracle, Christianity would have pervaded the Roman empire at all; half, or the major part, of the Roman world might have remained in irreligion and idolatry to this day. Similar advantages of an establishment may be observed in the history of our own country.

On the other hand, it has been frequently said, that the great corruption of the Gospel began from the days of Con-

stantine. This, I have shown already, was not the case. The corruption had begun a considerable time before, nor does it appear that the decline of vital religion was greater than might have been expected from the general course of things; and if no establishment at all had taken place, it would probably have been more rapid. There would certainly have been this remarkable difference, namely, that half of the Roman world, without the aid of the magistrate would have remained destitute of even the form of Christianity. Corruption of doctrine and discipline ought not to be laid at the door of ecclesiastical establishments, but to be imputed to the degeneracy of men themselves. It would not be hard to point out many persons in our own country, who voluntarily separate from the establishment, and who are nearly void of church-discipline, and even more deeply and more systematically corrupt in doctrine than the most heterodox and unevangelical theologians, who inconsistently remain members of the Church of England. The best ecclesiastical establishments cannot prevent the decay of vital godliness; but, under the providence of God, they strengthen the hands of sincere, humble-minded believers, and check the influence both of open and of disguised enemies of Christianity.

The Liturgy alone of the Church of England has long proved, and continues to prove, a strong bulwark against all the efforts of heretical innovators, and corrupters of doctrine.

If these arguments and observations were kept in view, dissenters, who have been accustomed to speak disrespectfully of our ecclesiastical establishment, would probably find more to commend, and less to find fault with.

I shall not be surprised, however, if some persons still feel themselves dissatisfied with the result of these reflections. The subject is arduous and intricate, and has difficulties peculiarly its own. The variety of religious opinions among men is almost endless; and it is no easy matter to unite into one political mass, a multitude of particles totally heterogeneous with respect to each other. A notion also has been maintained with much industry and zeal, that religion ought to be "fettered by no political institutions." We have been perpetually asked, Why should the majority,

why should governors, why should any one dictate to us in religion? Why have not we a right to choose for ourselves, what religion we wish to propagate? However confident others may be of the rectitude of their system, may not we be as confident of the rectitude of ours? Who shall decide between us?

This is specious, and many seem hence inclined entirely to separate religious from political considerations. "Appoint," say they, "a good government, perfectly abstracted from all religion. Let the civil magistrate show himself totally impartial in regard to all modes of faith: let him protect all persons so long as they obey the rules of civil society. Let the rights of conscience be kept sacred: in religion man is accountable to God alone." Those, who hold out this language, cut the gordian knot at once, and would extricate us from all difficulties, provided they could prove, that it is really practicable to erect a permanent government perfectly detached from all religious sanctions. But this would indeed be "A MIGHTY MAZE WITHOUT A PLAN!" Suppose a number should choose to be atheists: If this reasoning be good, atheism, as well as any other opinion, ought to be tolerated. Then, mark the consequences: the use of oaths, which among all civilized nations has ever been the legitimate method of ENDING ALL STRIFE, is at once superseded. He must have a considerable degree of hardihood in politics, who would atttempt to support a government contradictory, in its whole plan, to the universal voice of ancient wisdom. Certain it is, that in Scripture all just government is founded on the fear of God, and all legislators, Pagan as well as Jewish and Christian, have, with a greater or less degree of perfection, proceeded on this foundation. The belief of a future state, of some supreme Judge and Arbiter of mankind, has ever been instilled into subjects by all lawgivers. It were easy to multiply proofs of this. Suffice it to give the testimony of one, who may be called himself a host, on account of his great knowledge of mankind, the extent and variety of his learning, and the solidity of his judgment. Plutarch, advers. Colotem. p. 1125, after having observed, that no man could ever say, that he saw a city without some sort of temple, or some mark of divine worship, subjoins, αλλα πολις

αν μοι δοκει μαλλον εδαφες χωρις, η πολιτεια της περι θεων δοξης αναιρηθεισης παντελασι, συστασιν λαβειν, η λαβουσα τηρησαι. "A city seems to me more capable of being built without a foundation, than a polity is capable of receiving a system, or having received one, of preserving it, if sentiments of religion be entirely removed."

Will any adversary of religious establishments say, that no considerable part of a community will ever go the length of throwing aside all religion; and that, in these enlightened times, men will at least retain the belief of a God and of a future state?—I wish the contrary supposition could be proved an extravagant conjecture.—What are the present doctrines of a neighbouring nation, who have not only rejected the sacred institutions of the Bible, as the Sabbath, and the division of time into periods of seven days, &c. but who have also lately discovered that death is an eternal sleep, and of course, that there is no reason to apprehend a future state of retribution? *—When such strides as these are once taken, PRACTICAL atheism can be at no great distance. And as to a merely theoretical belief of one SELF-EXISTENT Cause, or of several self-existent causes, where the Deity is excluded from being the moral governor of the world, such a speculative notion is hardly worth contending for.

It is too true, that the effect of a general belief of religion on men's practice is faint and languid, and by no means proportioned to the importance of the subject; but perhaps we can scarce decide how much better in its moral influence, some principle, is than none at all. Men are naturally propense to wickedness; the common sense of mankind has in some degree always confessed this; and here, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, the language of poets has more truth in it than that of philosophers. The former speak the feeling of nature, and confess that men unrestrained will run into all sorts of wickedness; the latter, by sophistry, have perverted every thing in morals. How is it possible to construct a government, that shall preserve order and decorum for such depraved beings, without some religious establishment?

* Written about the time of the French revolution and the murder of the king, 1792-3.

The very attempt itself is to encourage atheism: and men, who find the regard of the Divine authority to be left out of the class of political duties, will naturally be led to the greatest and the highest degrees of profaneness. To propagate impiety is to propagate human misery. Shall men be restrained, by the civil sword, from circulating whatever may be hurtful to the health and property of their fellow-creatures; and will you allow them, with no restraint of any kind, to propagate that which will poison the mind, and render human life an intolerable scene of evil? Whether men like the expression of ALLIANCE BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE, or not, there is a natural connexion between government and religion, which, in practice, will appear, and have real effects, however plausible it may seem, in theory, to reprobate such connexion.

On this occasion the laudable practice of some Dissenters from the established church is frequently appealed to, for the purpose of showing, that love of Christianity and of our country, and all other virtues both public and private, may abound and flourish without the support of any laws in favour of particular opinions.——It is easy to show that there is not much in this argument—and for this end, we need neither dissect it very nicely, nor detract from the merits either of individuals or of whole sects. Let it be admitted, that, in many cases, the conduct of Dissenters has been useful and exemplary. Yet who will deny, that probably the existence, and certainly the energy, of sectaries themselves, frequently depend in some measure on their opposition to the establishment? And happy it is for themselves, happy for the members of the established church, happy for the community at large, when an opposition of this sort shows itself in producing a virtuous emulation. We may then expect to see Christian examples of industry, learning, piety, and patriotism.

But, without an establishment provided by the state, the greater part will scarcely have any religion at all, wickedness will be practised on the boldest scale; and if the form of government have a large portion of liberty in its texture, the manners will be egregiously dissolute. Democracy indeed, pure and unqualified, is the system which

will harmonize the most easily with a polity altogether abstracted from religion; and this very consideration affords, perhaps, no inconsiderable argument against that species of government. But even if the government were, in other respects, the soundest and the wisest effort of human sagacity, it will probably prove only a curse to its citizens, unless some legal provision be made for religion. God himself, there is the highest reason to conclude, WILL SET HIS FACE AGAINST IT, and confound it. Nations, whose government has been seasoned with religious institutions, can scarce conceive to what lengths of villany and flagitiousness, such an atheistic institution will lead its subjects; and all Europe will not be at a loss where to look for an instance of its effects.

Without entering minutely into the circumstances of Pagan nations, let us take it for granted, that there are certain fundamental articles of revealed religion, a few of immense importance, which the legislator ought carefully to select from a number of subordinate truths and circumstantials. These last he may safely leave to the consciences of men, by providing a toleration in which they may securely range. But the essentials of religion it is his duty to support, and not permit them to be derided and insulted by the profane attacks either of ignorant or of learned enemies of religion. To neglect them, would obviously be a far greater crime in him, than in those who have not had his advantages of information. Is it still said, Who shall decide what these fundamentals are? If men would seriously weigh the doctrines of the Scriptures, with an humble spirit, and in the use of prayer, they would probably be surprised to find how very small would be their differences of opinion. And one thing, which I propose to show in the course of this history, is the agreement of persons of this description in all ages; for in regard to fundamentals, it is certainly much closer and more uniform than many believe. No man ought to plead conscience for the neglect of that duty on which his salvation must depend. It is certain that these essentials cannot be neglected or despised without a turpitude of heart, which the Scripture connects with the final ruin of the soul. The difficulty of providing a government equi-

tably adapted to all consciences, if pushed into the extreme, supposes that there is no certain criterion of divine truth, and that men may, without moral guilt, believe any thing or nothing. But as these positions are inadmissible with all but sceptics, and persons altogether profane, the connexion between sentiment and practice is too important, to justify the neglect of all religion in political establishments, for the sake of pleasing the worst part of the human species. If, after all, a government established on such principles should bear hard on dissolute men, there seems no remedy; guilt must have its inconveniences. And there are no common principles on which a believer of revealed religion and an infidel can unite in the formation of a government.

The practical inferences are obvious. The subjects of a Christian government will consist of three classes. The friends of the establishment, who will, of course, support it; Dissenters, who, owning its religious fundamentals, differ in some subordinate sentiments; and those Dissenters, who are hostile to all religion, or, at least, are fond of a religion subversive of the great truths of Christianity. The members of the establishment, at the same time that they support its institutions with firmness, ought to exercise forbearance and charity toward the first class of Dissenters, and to think no worse of any man for differing in opinion from himself, where it is evident that he acts with uprightness. They owe charity also to the second class of Dissenters, but charity of a very different kind. The first class of Dissenters, convinced of the importance and utility of religious establishments, ought to support that, of whose friendly protection they daily feel the benefit in society, while they enjoy the privilege of toleration; and to view themselves as coalescing with the churchmen, who, like them, hold what is fundamentally Christian, rather than with those Dissenters who oppose Christianity itself. To persons of this last character I can give no political advice, till they learn antecedently, to receive the religion of Jesus itself, because till then, I can apply no principles to their consciences, which they will admit.

The happy government, under which we live, has, for many years past, exhibited to the world a fine example of

an ecclesiastical establishment, framed and modelled according to the principles inculcated in this Chapter. The great truths of religion are supported by laws; and the same laws provide effectual restraints against propagators of false doctrine. Notwithstanding the vice, heresy, and profaneness, which prevail among us, we do not so much stand in need of new laws, as of zealous magistrates to enforce those which already exist.

It is sometimes said, that subscription to articles, and other tests of religious opinions, are injurious to the morals of men, by inducing them to act the part of hypocrites, for the sake of worldly advantage. Supposing this to happen in some instances, nevertheless the answer is, that this inconvenience is to be hazarded, because unavoidable, if we aim at promoting the general good. It is expedient that there should be a public liturgy, and proper persons to read the same, and to teach the true doctrines of Christ; and it is very necessary that these persons should be known to approve the forms of worship according to which they officiate, and to believe the doctrines which they are bound to inculcate. If some persons will, hypocritically, profess themselves believers of what in their hearts they think contrary to truth, the guilt of such persons will lie at their own door, in this case exactly as in all others, where men act insincerely for the sake of gain or convenience. The true state of this question is, whether an ecclesiastical establishment wisely constructed, has not in its nature a tendency to propagate the influence of Christianity, that is, to make its doctrines known, and sincerely believed, and its precepts diligently practised among all ranks of people; and not, whether a sacred institution of this kind is capable of being, now and then, abused and perverted, or of becoming a snare and temptation to an unfair mind.

I shall conclude this subject with briefly taking notice of an objection, which, on its first proposal, is apt to startle the best wishers to religion, and the warmest advocates of ecclesiastical establishments. Suppose the civil magistrate should happen to have formed an erroneous judgment concerning the true religion; will he not in that case, according to our own principle of general expediency,

be justified in establishing a false one? I scruple not to give a decisive negative to this question, so far as it concerns those, who have had an opportunity of understanding and receiving the revealed will of God. For, the situation of such countries as have never heard of Jesus Christ and his Gospel, I do not here consider. The evidences of the truth of Christianity are so full and so clear, that as we have repeatedly said, they cannot be rejected without great wickedness of heart. Nothing therefore can justify the civil magistrate in establishing a false religion. Shall we restrain and punish by positive laws the individual who propagates atheism or infidelity, and at the same time shall we approve the conduct of the magistrate, who erects and supports a national establishment of false religion; and who, by his institutions, prolongs and extends the mischief, much more than any individual, unarmed with the authority of laws, could possibly do? Such a magistrate may indeed plead his sincerity and scruples of conscience; but we have the authority of the word of God for ascribing his unbelief to gross negligence, or wilful blindness. There is then no difficulty on this head: governors of states, if they support a false religion, have reason to expect the heavy judgments of God. Let them consider the history of Jeroboam and of his successors in the kingdom of Israel. They all SINNED, AND THEY ALL MADE ISRAEL TO SIN, IN PROVOKING THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL TO ANGER WITH THEIR VANITIES, that is, with their establishment of false religion:* UNTIL THE LORD REMOVED ISRAEL OUT OF HIS SIGHT.†

A real difficulty, however, respecting the OBEDIENCE of the subject, may occur, whenever it pleases God, for the punishment of the sins of a nation, to permit a false religion to be established and supported by the ruling powers.

It may then be asked, whether a true believer of Christianity ought not to oppose the religious institutions of the country, in which he lives, and to propagate his own opinions? or, whether he is to submit to the civil magistrate, "to bow down himself in the house of Rimmon," and to surrender that faith, upon which he depends for eternal salvation?

* 1 Kings xvi. 13. † 2 Kings xvii. 23.

The general solution of these questions must be derived from a due consideration of the meaning of that apostolical maxim, "We ought to obey God rather than men."* If therefore, through the corruption of human nature, the state will not establish true Christianity, but a false religion, I know no way to be pursued, but that of the Apostles, namely, for believers to propagate and to practise divine truth, and to suffer patiently for the truth's sake, according to the will of God. For, on the one hand, I find nothing in Scripture to justify Christians in resisting their governors by force, or in compelling them to make new ordinances; and, on the other hand, to comply with Anti-Christian institutions, would be to "sin a great sin," as Jeroboam's subjects did.† The middle line of conduct is pointed out by our Saviour in that sentence, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another."‡

Several valuable miscellaneous articles must now be attended to, before we dismiss the fourth century.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE PRIVATE LIFE AND THE WORKS OF AMBROSE.

If we had the real life of this bishop, written by Paulinus of Nola, we might make a profitable use of it. But that which goes under his name,§ is so stuffed with fables, that I scarcely know how to quote it. Ambrose died about the year 397, admired, regretted, and lamented by the whole Christian world. His life not improbably had been shortened by the incessant activity of his mind, and by the multiplicity of his employments; for he was only fifty-seven years old, and had been appointed bishop of Milan at the age of thirty-four.

Ambrose dies, A.D. 397.

His spirit was remarkably kind and sympathetic; his

* Acts v. 29.
† 2 Kings xvii. 21.
‡ Matt. x. 23.
§ It is prefixed to the works of Ambrose.

benevolence was extended to all, but especially to those of the household of faith. His estate, real and personal, he bestowed on the poor, and for the support of the church, styling the poor his stewards and treasurers.* His labours were immense: he administered the eucharist daily, and preached commonly on the Lord's day, frequently on extraordinary occasions, and spent much time in teaching catechumens. His temper was heroic and strong; and no dignity or authority could shelter offenders from his episcopal rebukes, where he deemed it his duty to reprehend. Augustine † tells us, that he found it, in a manner, impossible to have access to him, because of the multiplicity of his employments. The time he could spare from pastoral and charitable engagements was devoted to study and meditation.

The moral writings of Ambrose contain various things of solid utility; his Treatise on Offices shines among these. It was evidently his wish to imitate Tully, and to show the superiority of Christian over philosophical morals. A noble design, but, considered as a whole, feebly executed, because conducted without a plan. He modestly owns, indeed, that he was called to teach, before he himself had learned. But he might have both preached and written better, had he always attended to the simple word of God, and exercised his own natural good sense in humble dependence on DIVINE GRACE, and paid less regard to the fanciful writings of Origen, which corrupted his understanding exceedingly. Less of this, however, appears in his moral than in his theological pieces.

In his usual manner, which is sententious, and full of quick turns, he discourses strikingly of the excellent use of taciturnity, and the difficulty of acquiring it. "Most men speak, when they do not know how to be silent. Seldom do you see any one silent, when to [say nothing is best for him.] He is wise who knows [c. 2.] when to hold his peace.—Must we then be dumb? No; for there is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. And if we must give an account of every idle word, take care lest you have to answer also for idle [c. 3.] silence.—Tie your tongue, lest it be wanton and luxuriant;

* Orat. in Aux. c. 33. † [Augustin. Confess. l. vi. c. 3.]

—keep it within the banks; a rapidly-flowing river soon collects mud."*

His ideas of decorum in behaviour and carriage he illustrates by the account of two persons of his own diocese. The first was a friend of his own, who by sedulous offices recommended himself to Ambrose, in order to be admitted [into holy orders.] The only reason why Ambrose refused, was because his gestures were light and indecent. The other he found already a clergyman, and made this sole exception, namely, of indecent levity, to his conduct. His judgment was verified in both. The former, during the Arian persecution at Milan, deserted the faith; the latter, through the love of gain, denied himself to be a priest of Ambrose's diocese, to avoid judicial penalties.

[c. 18. s. 72.]

His directions to his clergy would deserve to be made a part of an episcopal charge in every age of the Church. "It becomes," says he, "the prudence and gravity of clergymen, to avoid the public banquets frequently made for strangers: you may exercise hospitality to them at your own houses, and by this caution there will be no room for reproach. Entertainments of this sort take up much time, and also evidence a fondness for feasting. Secular and voluptuous discourse is apt to creep in; to shut your ears is impossible; to forbid, will be looked on as imperious.—Why do you not employ the time which is free from clerical employments in reading? Why do you not revisit Christ, speak to Christ, hear Christ? We speak to him, when we pray; we hear him, when we read the divine oracles. What have we to do with other men's houses?—Let them rather come to us, who want us. What have we to do with idle chit-chat? We received the ministry to attend on the service of Christ, not to pay court to men."†

[Sect. 86.]

[Sect. 88.]

In his book of Repentance, he remonstrates with great justice against the inexorable spirit of the Novatians, in refusing to re-admit penitents into the church. "Learn of me," says Christ, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." "I am unmerciful, says the Novatian."‡

[Sect. 14.]

* C. 2 and 3. B. i. de Officiis. † B. i. de Officiis, 20.
‡ B. i. c. 2, and 3.

In the same chapter, he bears testimony to the immaculate conception of Jesus, and to the native depravity of mankind. "He was not like the rest of us, born in the ordinary way of generation, but born from the Holy Ghost, and he received from the virgin a spotless [Sect. 13.] body, with no taint of sin. For we are all born in sin, as David witnesses; I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me." I only remind the reader here of the preservation of two important truths in the Church during the days of Ambrose.

Hear how humbly and evangelically he speaks of himself.* "How shall I hear thee say to me, He has loved much, and is forgiven much? I confess my debts were greater than those of the penitent woman, [Sect. 67.] and more was forgiven me, who was called into the ministry from the noise of the forum, and the terror of judicial administration.—Yet, if we cannot equal her, the Lord Jesus knows how to support the weak, and [Sect. 70.] to bring with himself the fountain of living water. He came to the grave himself.—Oh, that thou wouldest come to this my sepulchre of corruption, Lord Jesus, and wash me with thy tears! If thou weep for [Sect. 71.] me, I shall be saved. Thou shalt call me from the grave of this body, and say, come forth: that my thoughts may go forth to Christ, call forth [then] thy servant. Though bound with the chains of my sins, I am entangled hand and foot, and buried in dead works; on thy [Sect. 72.] call I shall come forth free, and be found one of those who sit at thy table.—It shall be said, behold a man taken from the midst of secular vanity, remains in the priesthood not by his own strength, but by the grace of Christ. Preserve, Lord, thy own gift.—I know myself unworthy of the episcopal office, because I had given my- [Sect. 73.] self to this world, but, by thy grace, I am what I am. The least of all bishops: yet because I have undertaken some labour for thy Church, preserve this fruit, lest whom thou callest to the ministry, when lost, thou shouldest suffer to perish in that ministry: And particularly, grant me the spirit of sympathizing with sinners—that I may not proudly chide, but mourn and weep; that while I deplore another,

* B. ii. de Pœnitentia, c. 8, and 9.

I may mourn over myself, saying, Tamar is more righteous than I.* Perhaps a young person may have sinned, deceived and hurried on into folly; we old persons
[Sect. 74.] sin also. The law of the flesh rebels against the law of our mind, even in us, whose duty it is to teach. Tamar is more righteous than I. We blame the avarice
[Sect. 75.] of another; let us remember whether our conduct has [never] been stained with the same vice, which secretly dwells in our corrupt nature, and let each say, Tamar is more righteous than I. The same may
[Sect. 76.] be said with respect to the vice of anger. This is the way to avoid the severity of that just rebuke of our Lord concerning the mote and the beam.—
[Sect. 78.] He who rejoices in another's fall, rejoices in the devil's victory. Let us rather grieve, when we hear that a man perishes for whom Christ
[Sect. 80 & 82.] died.—Let us repent, and hope for pardon by faith, not as an act of justice.—God wants not our money, but our faith.†

Should any, who calls himself a minister of Christ, however dignified, distinguished, or denominated, read these lines of Ambrose, and catch a little of the tenderness, humility, and charity, which they breathe, and conceive more highly and more reverently of his office than he did before, and be stirred up to a measure of the same spirit, I shall rejoice that I have not laid them before the reader in vain. In truth, the ideas of the pastoral office were in Ambrose exceedingly serious, meek, lowly, and devotional. Have we not, too generally, great occasion to be humbled, on comparing ourselves with this holy servant of God?

That good men, who see and feel the evil of the world, should be tempted to seek for solitude and retirement, is so natural, that one does not wonder at the growth of the monastic spirit. The true security against it would have been, to have attended more closely to the scriptural rules of secular conduct given to Christians, and to have exercised more faith in those divine promises, which engage

* Gen. xxxviii. 26.

† [This is by no means a continuous translation, but such sentences are selected as Milner thought most striking or most profitable.]

to preserve the soul in the midst of the world. Such an attention and exercise would have led Christians into a far nobler method of serving God, and letting their light shine before men, than that self-devised one, which many took, of retiring altogether from society. Ambrose, I have already observed, unhappily contributed much to the growth of this monastic taste; yet the following quotation shows, how serious and upright were his views, and how deeply conscious he was of the difficulties of the Christian life. "I wish a cautious and earnest affection for the things of God were as easy to be attained, as it is easy to speak of it. But the enticement of earthly lusts frequently creeps in, and the diffusion of vanity fills the mind.—To avoid these snares is difficult, to be divested of them impossible. In fine, that the thing is rather matter of desire than effect, the prophet confesses, in saying, 'Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' Our heart is not in our own power; our thoughts by sudden incursions confound the mind, and draw it a different way from what we have determined.—Who so happy as always to mount upwards in his heart? How can this be done without divine aid? Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." * [Sect. 1.] [Sect. 2.]

He who feels so strongly the power of that sin which dwelleth in us,† needs the light of grace to conduct him. Nor was it wanting in Ambrose. In that age of declension, not of apostacy from the faith, the candlestick of Milan was possessed of as clear and steady a light, under the ministration of her angel,‡ as any at that time in the Christian world. Hear his summary view of the Gospel salvation: "God therefore assumed flesh, that he might abolish the curse of sinful flesh, and was made a curse for us, that the blessing might swallow up the curse; and that righteousness, pardon, and life, might swallow up our sin, our condemnation, and our death. For he underwent death, that the sentence might be fulfilled. Nothing is done in the Gospel against the sentence of God, since the condition of the divine sentence has been [Sect. 44.]

* Ps. lxxxiv. Ambrose de Fuga Seculi, C. i. † Rom. vii. 17.
‡ Rev. i. 20; "the angels of the seven churches."

fulfilled.—We are dead with Christ: why then do we seek any more the acts of this life? For we carry about us the death of Christ, that the life of Christ may also be manifested in us. We live therefore now, not our own life, but the life of Christ,—of all virtues. We are risen with Christ, let us live in him, let us rise in him, that the serpent may not be able to find in earthly things our heel, which he may wound." * The reader, who is well versed in St. Paul's epistles, will see how the spirit of them was understood by Ambrose.

The palm of heavenly-mindedness, in which the primitive Christians so much excelled, was still in the possession of many in the fourth century. The last chapter of Ambrose, on the benefit of death, is remarkable in this light. Take notice of a few sentences.

† "We shall go to those who sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because, being asked to the supper, they made no excuse. We shall go, where there is a paradise of pleasure: where [Adam,] who fell among thieves, no longer weeps over his wounds, where the thief himself rejoices in the participation of the heavenly kingdom, where there shall be no more storms or vicissitudes, but the glory of God alone shall shine. We shall go where Jesus has prepared mansions for his servants, that where he is, there we may be also.—The will of Christ is the same as performance. That we may know his true will, he hath said, Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.—We follow thee, Lord Jesus, but draw us that we may follow; no one rises without thee—open to us thy good, which David desired to see, when he said, I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.—Show us that good, which in its nature is unchangeable, and which, when we arrive at heaven, we shall never cease to acknowledge and approve. There thy saints are freed from errors and anxieties, from folly and ignorance, from

[Sect. 54.]

[Sect. 55.]

* [Milner has selected these passages from a treatise, containing a great deal of very absurd allegorical interpretation, to show that amid all this hay and stubble, there was some gold and silver, and precious stones.]

† [Lib. de bono Mort. c. 12. sect. 53.]

fear and terror, from all lusts and carnal affections.—Let us seek him, and embrace his feet, and worship him, that he may say to us, Fear not, I am the remission of sins—I am the light—I am the life: he that cometh to me shall not see death: because he is the fulness of divinity." [Sect. 57.]

In his three books concerning the Holy Ghost, he proves his Deity, partly by express testimony, such as, God is a spirit,* the Lord is that spirit; but chiefly by showing that whatever is said of the divine properties and acts of the Father and of the Son, is said also of the Holy Ghost.

In comforting Faustinus, who mourned for the death of a sister, he says, "If it be said to the soul, thy strength shall be renewed,† like the eagle; why should we grieve? Why should we groan for the dead, when the reconciliation of the world with God the Father is made by Jesus Christ? As we hold the benefits of Christ before all men, and before you, we are ambassadors for Christ, that you should know his gifts to be without repentance; that you may believe as you have always done, nor bring your faith into doubt by excess of sorrow, because Jesus was made sin for us, that he might take away the sin of the world, and we might be made the righteousness of God in him."‡

In another epistle he gives an excellent view of spiritual illumination, and of Christ dwelling in the heart:§ of which suffice it to say, that he has the same views and sensations as holy men have confessed in all times and circumstances.

An epistolary address to clergymen deserves to be read by persons of this order in all ages.‖ "It is," says he, "a common temptation to the human mind, that persons meeting with some slight offence in the path of duty, are inclined to depart from it. In a clergyman such conduct is peculiarly lamentable. Satan labours by this method, if he can by no other, to offend them. What advantage is it to me to remain in the pastoral office, to be laboriously

* John iv. 24. It is remarkable what he observes of the fraud committed by the Arians on the sacred volume at Milan, in the time of his predecessor Auxentius, namely, that they erased this text out of St. John's Gospel. [De Spirit. Sanct. l. iii. c. 10. sect. 59.] † Psalm ciii. 5.
‡ Epis. 8. or 39. b. ii. § Epis. 11. or 29. b. iii. ‖ [Epis. 82.]

employed, and ill-treated, as if I had no other way of getting my bread? What, are worldly ends the governing motive, and do you not mean to lay up in store for the world to come? Say not of thy God, he is a hard master; say not of thy office, it is unprofitable. The devil envies thy hope. Depart not from the Lord's inheritance, that he may at length bid thee enter into his joy. Farewell, my sons, and serve the Lord; for he is a good Master." *

His expositions of Scripture are liable to great exceptions in point of accuracy, perspicuity, and order. The fancies of Origenism seduced him continually into vague and arbitrary interpretations. Yet is he true to the fundamentals of divine truth, and a rich unction of godliness will at all times afford to the reader that edification which is in vain to be expected from cold, but more faultless comments. The doctrine of predestination and election he evidently misunderstands: this part of divine truth had indeed scarcely seen the light since the days of Justin Martyr. On justification, he is more explicit, and sometimes uses the term in its proper forensic sense. The fathers, in these times, commonly confounded it with sanctification, though, in substance, they held the true doctrine concerning it. Ambrose is perhaps more clear of mistake, in this respect, than most of them.

Yet he appears to have given into the same sort of superstitions concerning the dead, which I remarked in the historian Sulpicius Severus; nor is it to be denied, that he helped forward the growth of monastic bondage and prelatical pride, by giving occasion to others, who followed, to make use of his well-meant positions, for the furtherance of their own wicked designs. The same thing must, however, be said of his works, as of those of many of the fathers, that great injustice is done to his memory by frauds and interpolations. In the dark times, every error and absurdity seems to have come forth with the pretended patronage of some of the renowned doctors of antiquity. In one or two instances alone works have been ascribed to him, which in clearness of doctrine and

* [The above is not by any means a close translation of the sentences, selected from the 82nd letter: but, the sense is very well and fully given.]

excellence of composition exceed the magnitude of his abilities, and I shall therefore defer the consideration of them at present.

But the lover of godliness will be disposed to forget his errors and superstitions, faults of the times rather than of his disposition, and will remember only the fervent, the humble, the laborious, and the charitable bishop of Milan.

CHAP. XIX.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL AMONG BARBARIANS; THE PROGRESS OF NOVATIANISM, AND OF MONASTICISM.

I HAVE but little to say on each of these articles, partly, because materials are scanty, and partly because where they are more plentiful, they are uninteresting. Let us, however, collect from them, if we can, an enlivening ray or two of the Church of Christ.

The Saracens, the descendants of Ishmael, afterwards so ennobled, or rather disgraced, by Mahomet the imposter, were at war with the Romans, under the conduct of their queen Maovia, who was a Christian. The emperor Valens made peace with her, one of the conditions of which was, that Moses a monk, who lived in the desert between Egypt and Palestine, should be appointed bishop of her nation. Valens ordered him to be carried to Alexandria, there to be ordained by Lucius. Moses, who knew the Arian character of that Metropolitan, said before him and the magistrates, and all the people, Stay, I am not worthy to be called a bishop; but if I am called to this office, unworthy as I am, for the good of souls, I take the Creator of all things to witness, that I will not receive the imposition of your hands, which are defiled with the blood of so many holy men. If you know not my faith, replied Lucius, learn it from my mouth, and judge not by reports. Moses, however, was aware of the Arian subtilties, and chose to stand by the evidence of works. I know your faith, said he; the pastors exiled among infidels, condemned to the mines, thrown to the wild beasts, or destroyed by fire, testify your creed; the eyes speak more strongly than the ears.*

* Sozom. b. vi. c. 38. [Socrat. iv. c. 36. Theodoret. iv. c. 23.]

Political necessities sometimes restrain the passions of wicked men. Lucius was obliged to dissemble his resentment, on account of the situation of Valens his master, and permit Moses to receive ordination from the exiled bishops. His labours among the Saracens were crowned with success. The nation before his time was chiefly idolatrous: that his work was blessed among them appears from hence, that he kept them in peace with the Romans. But this is all the account we have of the fruits.

The Goths had long harassed the Roman empire with their incursions; but their depredations were made subservient to the progress of the Gospel. I have observed under the last century, that some captive bishops laboured among them with good success. And the work was of an abiding nature. Ulfilas, who is called the Apostle of the Goth, was descended from some of these. He, coming ambassador to Constantine, was ordained first bishop of the Christian Goths by Eusebius of Nicomedia. I have shown from a passage in Theodoret,* that the Arians seem to have imposed upon him by ambiguity of terms, in consequence of which he drew over his Goths to communicate with that sect. Certain it is, that this people held the Nicene faith for a considerable time, if we may credit Augustine. In the time of Valens, many of them suffered death from an idolatrous persecuting prince of their own. Ulfilas coming from his countrymen on an embassy to Valens, that he might induce him to allow them a settlement in Thrace, was on that occasion brought over to communicate with the Arians. That he was a man of superior genius and endowments, is certain. He civilized and polished this barbarous people, and first introduced the use of letters among them, and translated the Scriptures into their tongue for their use, omitting the books of the Kings, because he thought it might encourage the ferociousness of the Goths, who were already too warlike. A copy of his version of the four gospels is still extant, a monument of the ancient Teutonic language. It is with regret I leave the account of this great man so imperfect, whose labours and success seem to show, that the hand of the Lord must have been with him. But, however innocent

* [Theodoret. iv. c. 37.]

he and his contemporaries might be of the Arian heresy, the effect of their communication with the party was what might be foreseen. The whole church of the Goths, by degrees at least, came into Arianism, and the consequences will meet us in the course of this history.*

Heresies multiplied in this century, chiefly through the various ramifications of Arianism, which have been explained with more than sufficient accuracy by many writers. Of the dissenters, the Meletians continued throughout the century. The Donatists still remained in all their ferocity; of whom it will be more convenient to speak hereafter. The Novatians have found in the candid Socrates, a historian who gives us some authentic information, having himself been acquainted with the son of one of their presbyters. In Phrygia and Paphlagonia, their church was in a flourishing state to his day. The general church, though surely right in its principle of opposition to the particular point of Novatian inflexibility, yet afterward abused the licence of re-admission into the church granted to offenders; and as discipline relaxed in various places, all kinds of crimes abounded.—The people of Phrygia and Pamphylia, being habitually an abstemious people, averse to pleasures, and to the indulgence of sensuality, were on that account the more disposed to admit the severities of Novatianism.† In this century, a part of them separated themselves still farther from the general church, by appointing in a synod, that Easter should be observed at the same time that the Jews kept the feast of unleavened bread. But as Agelius the Novatian bishop of Constantinople, and other more celebrated bishops of their denomination, were not present, a schism was formed, from this circumstance, among them. Agelius presided forty years over their church at Constantinople, and died in the sixth year of Theodosius. When he was near his end, he ordained Sisinnius to be his successor, a presbyter of the church,‡ of great learning, who had been instructed by Maximus, the famous friend of Julian. The flock of Agelius murmured, because he had not ordained Marcian, a man of eminent piety, by whose means they had weathered, in safety, the persecution of

* Excerpt. Philostorgii apud Photium. [l. ii. c. 5. Socrat. iv. c. 33.]
† Socrates, b. iv. c. 28.
‡ Socrates, b. v. c. 21.

Valens. The aged bishop, willing to pacify them, ordained Marcian, and directed that he should be his immediate successor, and that Sisinnius should be the next bishop to Marcian.

Thus slender and scanty are the accounts left us of a bishop, who for so many years presided over a great flock in turbulent and trying times. On Marcian's succession, one Sabbatius, a Jew, receiving Christianity, was advanced by him to the office of presbyter, and in his heart panted after a bishopric. This man undertook to defend the innovation concerning Easter, which has been mentioned ; and first, under pretence of greater strictness of life, he withdrew himself from the church, declaring that he could not conscientiously communicate with some members of the congregation.

In time, however, his views were laid open, as he attempted to hold separate assemblies. Marcian then found his error in ordaining so ambitious a person, and often said in his grief, that he wished he had laid hands on thorns rather than on Sabbatius. He took measures, however, to disappoint his ambition. Calling a council, he sent for Sabbatius, and desired him to lay open the reasons of his disgust. The man informed them, that the difference of opinion concerning Easter was his grievance, as he thought that festival ought to be observed according to the rule of the synod of Pazum.* The bishops, suspecting his designs, obliged him to swear, that he would not attempt to become a bishop, and then decreed, that the time of observing Easter should be left indifferent, and that no schism should be made in the church on that account. Their design of preserving unity was laudable ; but it succeeded not. Sabbatius drew over a number of the simpler sort, and particularly those of Phrygia and Galatia, to his own Jewish mode, and got himself appointed bishop of his followers, in contradiction to his oath. The consequence was, a variety of divisions among the Novatians, concerning the time of Easter, and other frivolous subjects, and the crumbling of this church into contentious parties of different kinds.

Little can be said on this subject, but what must occur

* [Pazum is a village of Phrygia.]

to the mind of a thinking reader. This most respectable of all the dissenting churches seems to have preserved, for a considerable time, a strictness and purity of discipline and manners; but its essential characteristic of narrow bigotry, in things of no moment, gave occasion to internal divisions among its own members, which, fomented by unprincipled persons, must have perverted them much from the simplicity of the Gospel.

Monasticism continued to make a rapid progress through this whole century. It is not worthwhile to trace its progress particularly, nor to recite any of the ridiculous frauds, abuses and superstitions, which were connected with it. Self-righteous formality made rapid strides in the Christian world; one single observation, however, of an author, who has recorded much of this trash with great complacency, will deserve to be transcribed. "Most of these famous monks," says Sozomen, "lived to extreme old age; and I think that this was a mean of facilitating the progress of Christianity. Antioch excepted, Syria was very late in receiving the Gospel, and these monks were highly instrumental in the work, both in that country, and among the Persians and Saracens." That these countries, which were before, for the most part, void of the doctrine of Christ, might receive spiritual advantage from these superstitious men, is probable, because some genuine piety was doubtless among them. That Galatia and Cappadocia, which had long before been full of the best Christians, should do so, I very much doubt.* Superstition, drawing with it something of real Christianity, may bring a blessing to countries altogether profane or idolatrous:—to a people already well evangelized, it can only act as a poison.

CHAP. XX.

CHRISTIAN AUTHORS IN THIS CENTURY.

THERE were several persons of the name of Macarius,† who lived much about the same time. Hence it is as difficult as it would be uninteresting to determine o which of them the fifty homilies yet extant Macarius.

* Sozomen, b. vi. c. 34.

† [Gennadius de vir. illust. c. 10.]

belong. Their antiquity is doubtless great, and they give no small specimen of the divinity of the times. These are a few of the favourite thoughts of Macarius:

"Though a man be improved in virtue, he ought to look on himself as one who has done nothing, and [Hom. 10] should press forward to greater degrees, lest he lose the Holy Spirit by pride or sloth.—Man is capable of falling from that state of holiness in which he is, [Hom. 15, c. 27, & 37.] unless he preserve himself in it by humility, which is the infallible mark of a Christian.—Those who have not yet received grace, ought to do good and forsake evil by natural motives; but those who have received it, [Hom. 16. c. 6.] being possessed of love, need not such motives." —He thinks, that men may fall away after the highest attainments, and that it is impossible for any to be [Hom. 17.] certain of his salvation in this life. He observes, that to grow in grace without humility is impossible—that the soul after death goes immediately to that [Hom. 41. c. 3.] place, on which its love was fixed in this life;— that whatever good a man does by natural strength, can never save him without the grace of Jesus Christ; [Hom. 26. c. 18.] —that if the Holy Spirit does not produce in us the love of God, we cannot enter the kingdom of [Hom. 30.] heaven. He is fond of shewing, that we ought always so to labour, as if all depended on our own endeavours, and yet to acknowledge that we can do [Hom. 26. c. 10, 19 & 20.] nothing without God.*

Certainly a serious and humble spirit runs through these homilies, and they seem to have been written by a man earnestly engaged in the divine life, and sensible of the need of divine grace. With such dim kind of light many humble souls, in the dark ages, groped in their way safe to the heavenly kingdom, though, like Macarius, poorly furnished with evangelical views and doctrines. These men saw and felt, however, the necessity of conversion, and the importance of a principle of divine love; and hence their obscure light deserves to be called mid-day, compared with the darkness of those, who put mere natural light in the room

* Du Pin, Cent. iv. Macarii. [More striking passages might be selected from these Homilies, but as a whole not much instruction is to be derived from them.]

of the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and mere moral virtue in the room of divine charity.

* Victorinus of Africa had professed rhetoric many years at Rome, and was held in such high reputation, that a public statue was erected to his honour in the city. In his old age, however, he was converted, and was not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ in public. An animated and instructive account of this is given by Augustine† in his Confessions, which may meet us hereafter. At present, we are to view him as an author. He wrote against the Arians and the Manichees. In his treatise against the latter, he addresses his friend Justinus, who had been deceived by them, in this manner: "In vain do you macerate yourself with excessive mortifications; for after you have worn away yourself by your austerities, your flesh will return to the devil in darkness. I advise you to acknowledge, that God Almighty created you, that you may be truly the temple of God, according to the words of the Apostle, 'you are the temple of God, and his Spirit dwelleth in you.' If you have not the honour to be the temple of God, and to receive the Holy Spirit in you, Jesus Christ is come, not to save, but to destroy you." ‡ Victorinus.

The spirit of godliness, unquestionably, possessed this man: but his writings are, at present at least, very little interesting, though the passage I have quoted shows his holy taste. It were to be wished, that instead of subtilizing intricate controversies, he had favoured posterity with a plain view of the Lord's dealings with his own soul, which must, in a conversion so extraordinary as his, have been very instructive, and for the execution of which he must have been far more competent than for the invention or description of theological theories. But the humour of philosophical refinement guided far too much the best writers of these times, even such as Victorinus, who, being converted in his old age, was, probably, never well qualified to expound the Scriptures. If the reader regret how little of experimental divinity is laid before him, I join with his complaint: but my materials suffer me not to apply a remedy.

Pacianus,§ bishop of Barcelona in Spain, was a man

* [Hieron de vir. illust. c. 101.] † [Augustin. confess. l. viii. c. 2.]
‡ Du Pin, Cent. iv. Victorinus. § [Hieron. de vir. illust. c. 106.]

renowned both for piety and eloquence. Like most of this age, he exalts too much the forms of the church, and the dignity of the priesthood. Yet a strain of holy fervour seems to pervade his writings, and he combats the peculiar error of inflexible severity in the Novatians with just argument and charitable sentiments.* "If man be subject to these miseries (of sinning away his privileges) let us no more accuse the mercy of God, who has proposed these remedies to our diseases; let us no more efface the titles of God's clemency by an insupportable rigour, nor hinder sinners, by an inflexible hardness, from rejoicing in those gifts which God has bestowed upon them."†

Pacianus.

This is doubtless right; but when he excludes the Novatians from any part in the blessings of the church because of their schism, he doubtless falls into uncharitable bigotry, in which both churchmen and dissenters too much abounded; though, I apprehend, in obscure regions this evil more prevailed. We have seen, in what Christian charity the general church and Novatians could live in the great city of Constantinople.

Optatus,‡ bishop of Milevi in Numidia, deserves a place in these memoirs, on account of his judicious and able treatise against the Donatists. Of him, as of many other sensible writers, IT IS TO BE REGRETTED, that he did not choose a more useful subject. The case of the Donatists I shall reserve to the time of Augustine, whose character and conduct are much connected with the history of these dissenters. Of course, I have little to say of Optatus's writings. A serious spirit appears in them; and a single passage, which is introduced, in the way of digression, contains matter so truly Christian, that the reader will think it worth our attention; as it demonstrates, that evangelical truth was far from being lost as yet amidst the thick mists of superstition, and that the true resting-place of the soul in the doctrine of justification by Jesus Christ, the true humility, and real plan of sanctification, were understood, in some degree at least, by this author. Rebuking the pride of the Donatists, who boasted themselves to be holy and innocent, he says,§

Optatus writes against the Donatists, A. D. 370.

* [Ep. i. ad Symp.] † Du Pin, Cent. iv. Pacianus.

‡ [Hieron. de vir. illust. c. 110.]

§ [Lib. ii. in Biblioth. Patr. vol. iv. p. 452, and 3. ed. 1609, Paris.]

"Whence comes this sanctity of yours, which the Apostle St. John dared not to attribute to himself, seeing he says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. He who speaks after this manner, WISELY REFERS HIMSELF TO THE MERCY OF GOD; for a Christian may desire good, and endeavour [by the help of God] to walk in the way of salvation; but he cannot be perfect of himself. For though he does run, yet there will always remain something to be done by God to perfect him; and it is necessary that God should help a man in his weakness: for He is perfection, and there never was any but Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was perfect. All other men are imperfect. It belongs to us, to will and to run, but God only can give perfection. Jesus Christ has not given us perfect holiness, but has only promised it.* Dies about A. D. 380.

The Apollinarii,† father and son, were of Laodicea; the father a presbyter, the son a reader in the church. Both were skilled in Greek literature; the father taught grammar, the son rhetoric. Epiphanius, a sophist, was united with them in the closest intimacy. Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea, very properly fearing that the connexion with a pagan might endanger their souls, advised them to give up his acquaintance. They despised the advice, and persisted. George, the successor of Theodotus, afterward attempting in vain the same thing, expelled them at length from Christian communion. Incensed at this they set up a new sect, known by the name of the Apollinarian heresy, the principal mark of which is, that it ascertains precisely one point of the Arian creed, by denying to our Saviour a human soul, and supposing the inferior divine nature, which he had from the Father, to supply its place.‡ Apollinarii.

These men were doubtless persons of superior capacity. The son, particularly, was one of the greatest men of his time, in learning, genius, and powers of argument. His answer to Porphyry is looked on as the best defence of Christianity against Paganism. He it was, who in Julian's time, endeavoured to compensate to the Christian world

* Du Pin, Cent. iv. Optatus. † [Hieron de vir. illust. c. 104.]
‡ Socrates, b. ii. c. 46, [and iii. c. 16. Theodoret. v. c. 3.]

the loss of the classical authors, from the study of whom they were debarred by the persecution of that emperor. He wrote poems and dialogues, in imitation of Sophocles and Plato, on scriptural subjects. His translation of the Psalms into Greek verse, which remains to this day, is highly commended.*

What was wanting in these men? Humility. There have been persons in later times, like them, of good moral character, learned, acute, industrious, far surpassing many real saints, in capacity, and in usefulness too, so far as the externals of religion are concerned. Pride and self-confidence lead such men to speculate, where they ought to adore; to dispute, where they ought to pray; and to blaspheme, where they ought to submit. They treat with scorn the charitable admonitions of their pastors and godly friends, because they know languages and sciences better than their reprovers. Strangers to themselves, and to the whole work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and resisting all his godly motions, they cannot come to Christ, because they are unwilling to descend from their prodigious altitude into the valley of humiliation. Ambition in them must be fed; disappointed in the Church of Christ, they invent corrupt refinements, and seek to become heads of a party. He who knows that God taketh the wise in their craftiness, and revealeth himself to babes, will not stumble at such cases; and those few in all ages who stand superior to the rest of mankind in talents, and yet love genuine godliness, are only secured and hedged in by the Divine goodness, through a charitable course of discipline, often more severe than is needful for other Christians.

Didymus † of Alexandria may be fairly matched with Apollinarius, in greatness of understanding and accomplishments. Though he lost his sight at the age of five years, he became so vigorous and successful a student, that he was renowned for his skill in philosophy, rhetoric, and geometry. He filled the chair of the famous school of Alexandria with vast applause. Origenism was his favourite system, though, as

Didymus.

* Du Pin. [Soz. v. c. 18.]

† [Hieron. de vir. illust. c. 109. et in Chron. ann. 9. Valentin. and Valent. A. D. 372. Soz. iii. c. 15, and 6. c. 2. Theodoret. iv. c. 29. Socrat. iv. c. 25.]

far as appears, he continued always sound, and I hope, humble and holy, in Christian doctrine. His treatise on the Holy Spirit, of which only the Latin translation by Jerome has come down to us, is perhaps the best the Christian world ever saw on the subject. And whatever has been said, since that time, in defence of the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, seems, in substance, to be found in that book.

Gregory Nyssen,* brother of the famous Basil, was the bishop of Nyssa, a city of Cappadocia. Basil, and two of his brothers, embraced a solitary life; but Gregory married, and lived in society. Under Valens, he was faithful, and had the honour to be expelled from his church. In the year 378, he was restored. He died towards the end of the century. In a catechetical discourse, he shows a sound judgment, in laying down different rules of argumentation with Pagans, Jews, and Heretics. To defend the incarnation of God, he shows that man is fallen, and corrupted, and can be recovered only by his Creator; and hence, that the Word who created him, came himself to raise him again. He shows also, that to be born of a virgin, to eat, to drink, to die, and to be buried, are not things unbecoming the holy nature of God, because there is no sin in them: and that the Divinity, united to man, lost not its perfections, any more than the soul loses its properties by its union with the body.

Gregory Nyssen banished in A.D. 374.

Restored in 378.

Died in 379.

Once visiting Jerusalem,† he was hospitably received by three religious ladies of note there, Eustathia, Ambrosia, and Basilissa, and contemplated with delight the scenes of our Lord's abode on earth. But he tells us, that he found there little of true religion, and returned sorrowful to Antioch, whence he wrote to the three ladies, and cautioned them against being imposed on by those, who desired to make a prey of them. Being asked by a friend,‡ whether it was an essential part of religion to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he answered in the negative, and that a man had more reason to expect the Spirit of

* [Hieron. de vir. illust. c. 128.] † [Ep. ad Eustath. p. 1088, and 1093.]
‡ [Ep. de Eunt. Hierosol.]

God in Cappadocia, where true piety prevailed, than at Jerusalem, where, it seems, religion was run to a very low ebb. Thus much for Gregory Nyssen, whose piety at least deserves our regard, though as an author, he is in no very high estimation.*

Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, was not inferior to many in this century for unfeigned purity of faith and manners.

Epiphanius born about A.D. 320. elected Bishop of Cyprus in 366, died in 403.

But the particulars of his life are for the most part uninteresting. It is proper, however, to mention his zeal in tearing a painted curtain which he saw in a place of public worship.† This seems at once a proof of his detestation of images and pictures in religion, and also of the weak beginnings of that superstition in the fourth century. In this place let us not omit to observe his very laudable spirit of beneficence. Numbers from all parts sent him large sums to distribute to the needy, in confidence of his charity and integrity. His steward one day informed him, that his stock was nearly exhausted, and blamed his profuse liberality; but he continued still as liberal as before, till all was gone; when he received suddenly from a stranger a large bag of gold. Another story deserves to be recorded as a monument of Divine Providence, the rather, as it seems extremely well authenticated.‡ Two beggars agreeing to impose on him, one feigned himself dead, the other begged of Epiphanius to supply the expenses of his companion's funeral. Epiphanius granted the request; the beggar on the departure of the bishop desired his companion to rise; but the man was really dead!—To sport with the servants of God, and to abuse their kindness, is to provoke God himself, as the bishop told the survivor.

CHAP. XXI.

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN.

Some other persons, who lived in this century, will, on several accounts, deserve a more distinct attention. I shall

* Du Pin. Cave.

† [Epiphan. Ep. ad Joann. ap. Hieron. op. vol. iv. p. 828.]

‡ Sozom. b. vii. c. 27.

begin with Ephraim * the Syrian, who was born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia, of Christian parents, and was educated with great care from his infancy. His turn of mind from childhood was devout, studious, and contemplative, to an extreme degree. And since few persons in that age knew how to unite the real Christian life with the practice of all the duties of society, it is not to be wondered at, that the solitary taste prevailed much in Ephraim. It is rather a proof of uncommon good sense or charity, or of both, that at length he could be induced to quit his solitude,† and live in the great city of Edessa, for the sake of enjoying the benefit of Christian assemblies, and of rendering himself useful to his fellow-creatures. He wrote much on the Scriptures, and composed various devotional pieces in the Syriac, his native tongue; which in his own lifetime were translated into Greek, and were much admired by all the eastern churches. He never was advanced further in the ecclesiastical state, than to the office of deacon, and once he took a very extraordinary method to avoid being preferred to the office of a bishop. He feigned madness; and escaped. The reader will recollect something similar in the conduct of Ambrose, and may take occasion to lament the unhappy extremes of opposite kinds, which, in different ages, have disfigured the Church. In Ephraim's days, the pastoral character appeared to good men awful beyond measure, requiring little less than angelical virtue. In our days, is not conveniency and love of gain frequently the principal motive, and decency of character the principal qualification?

A noted heretic, named Harmonius,‡ the son of Bardesanes, industriously employed himself in composing religious hymns for the use of the Syrians, in which he interspersed his father's heretical notions, and the philosophy of the Greeks. Ephraim, whose views of the fundamentals of Christian faith were strictly sound, and to whom the faith of the Gospel was precious, made himself master of the measures and tunes, and, in the use of them, composed Christian hymns, which were well received by the Syrians, and sung to the same tunes as those of Harmonius. He

* [Hieron de vir. illust. c. 115.]

† Sozom. b. iii. c. 16.

‡ [Theodoret iv. c. 29.]

wrote also a discourse on the utility of psalmody, and exploded idle songs and dancing. Let this be regarded as a proof of his zeal and industry. Not long before his death, he gave an instance of charity that deserves to be recorded. A severe famine raged in Edessa, and many indigent persons died for want. He waited some time, to see if any would step forth to relieve them ;* but finding little appearance of this, the compassion of his heart at length broke through all the unhappy monastic restraints, by which even in Edessa, he had precluded himself from doing much good to the church; and going among the rich and wealthy, he vehemently reproved their inhumanity. They did, what persons of the same character do in all ages; they cleared themselves of avarice, but excused themselves on account of the difficulty of finding a proper person, whose discretion and fidelity might be trusted in the distribution of their alms. Do you think me competent to this office? replied Ephraim. All owned it without hesitation. "Then I will undertake it." Receiving their contributions, he caused three hundred beds to be brought into the public cloisters of the city, and the infirm to be placed on them, and he furnished them both with food and medicine. He took care also of strangers, and of those whom want had driven out of the country, and provided them all with necessary accommodations, till the dearth was abated.

How much is it to be regretted, that mistaken ideas of piety, into which young converts are very apt to fall, should have deprived the Christian world of so much benefit, as might have arisen from the talents and virtues of Ephraim! In this occasional sally, we see the outlines of A GENERAL INFIRMARY, drawn and brought into practice by a monk! That men, who mix with the world continually, should be covetous and selfish, will surprise no man, who knows human depravity. And what advantage did Satan gain, in these times, when the best and most excellent men hid themselves from the world, and as much as possible attended only to the cultivation of private virtues! A strong proof, this, of the low and reduced state of Christian knowledge. And as I know nothing more worth recording of the life of Ephraim, let us take a short view of his writings, in order

* Sozom. b. iii. c. 16.

to discover, if we can, the spirit of his religion. If I mistake not, we may see by a few quotations, which will serve instead of many, in a case where the character is exceedingly uniform, that his Christian love was much greater than his light, and that few men were better furnished and prepared for the very best use of evangelical consolation, if the theology of his time had afforded him easy access to it.

Speaking of love, he says, "Blessed is the man who possesses love, and with it departs to God; for He, knowing his own, will receive him into his bosom; he shall be a companion of angels, and reign with Christ. By love, God the Word came upon earth; by it, paradise has been opened to us, and an entrance has been shewn to all into heaven. Being enemies to God, by love we were reconciled. We may justly say, that God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." *

Hear him mourn over himself, and judge what a sense he had of natural depravity. "From my childhood I have been a vessel unprofitable and dishonourable.—Warning others, I have fallen myself into their evils twofold. Wo is me!—whence can there be any refuge,† unless the mercies of God shine quickly upon me. Nor is there any hope of salvation from works: While I speak of purity, I am thinking of uncleanness: While I am uttering rules for the conquest of the passions, my own are inwardly raging night and day. What excuse can I make? Alas! what a scrutiny must I undergo! I have had the form without the power of godliness. I fear, lest fire from heaven should consume me, (as it did the two sons of Aaron.)—Shall I then despair of salvation? By no means: this the adversary desires, in order to destroy me. I do not throw away myself; for I confide in the mercies of God, and your prayers for me.—I pray thee, cast me not away. Thou knowest the wounds of my soul; heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.—What shame will seize me, when those, who now count me holy, shall see me condemned, and when all secrets shall be laid open!" ‡

However defective his views of evangelical doctrine were, his ideas of that humility, which enters into the

* Ephraim's Works. Oxon. [Γ. Δ or p. iii. c. 4.]
† [ἀνοδος rather, a way of ascent.] ‡ Id. 16. [and 17. or p. 12, and 13.]

essence of the experience of them, are just and deep.

[P. 15. c. 35.] "Vain," says he, "is every endowment without humility. Pride labours to domineer over all, and lays a snare for every one in that way which is peculiar to each. The wise, the strong, the beautiful, the ingenious, are each exposed to danger from that in which they excel. The Lord, knowing our danger, hath set

[P. 16.] humility as our guard, saying, 'When ye have done all, say we are unprofitable servants.' Do those who labour abundantly in the ministry glory over those of a more still and quiet turn? behold, the Lord commends Mary sitting at his feet, as having chosen the good portion. Are the sedate inclined to glory over the active? behold the Son of man came to minister. To be

[P. 17.] lifted up, is to have a fleshly mind; and if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. When thou canst bear grievous things, against thy will, yet willingly, know that thou hast made proficiency in humility. Through pride, the Pharisee was condemned; through

[P. 19.] humility, the Publican was exalted; with whom may the Lord deign to rank us in his kingdom with all the just."

Observe how divinely he exhorts, though his manner of speaking evinces his ignorance of the true distinction between moral and natural inability: "He might have healed all the wounds of our souls, and compelled us violently to goodness; but he does not choose that method, that our choice may have its praise. Do we neglect to call for his help, when he loves and pities us? Hath he redeemed and enlightened us? He hath given us to see and taste of his grace; that we might seek him without ceasing. Happy he, who hath tasted of his love, and prepared himself to be alway filled with it. Filled with this love, he admits no other. Who would not love such a master, worship him, and confess his goodness? From his immense height and the blessed bosom of the Father did he not descend to us? The Invisible became visible—O wonder, full of fear and trembling! A hand of clay, formed of the dust, smote the Creator of heaven and earth; and we, poor dust and ashes, cannot bear the

contradiction of a word—What wilt thou say to Him in that day ?" *

Speaking of the day of judgment, he says, "An innumerable multitude, each raised from the dead, and clothed with his own body, exclaim, 'Glory to Him who hath raised us and gathered us together by his loving kindness.' † Blessed is he, who shall be counted worthy to see that hour, in which all that loved the immortal Bridegroom are taken up into the clouds to meet him. I [thought on that fearful judgment,] and trembled, and, groaning, wept till I had no more power to weep. My days have passed on, and my iniquities have been multiplied. Wo is me, my beloved! What shall I do in the shame of that hour, when my friends, who now see and bless me in this garb of piety, may behold me full of iniquity within? O gracious Lover of souls! by thy compassions I conjure thee, place me not at the left hand with the goats; but by thy kindness I implore thee, give me a contrite spirit, and purify me, that I may be a temple of thy grace. Sinner as I am, I knock at thy door without ceasing; slothful though I be, yet I walk in thy way." ‡

Will the reader hear the devotion of this broken-hearted saint? "I beseech thy goodness, heal my wounds, and enlighten my understanding, that I may see thy gracious dispensations towards me. When my heart is infatuated. let the salt of thy grace season it. Thou alone knowest, how my soul thirsts after thee, as a dry land. As thou hast ever heard me, neglect not now my petition: my mind is as a captive, yet seeking thee, the only true Saviour. Send thy grace, that I may eat and drink, and be satisfied. Distil one drop of thy love, that it may burn as liquid fire in my soul, and consume its thorns, even evil lusts." §

Were I to quote the very strong description which he gives of his own sinfulness,‖ persons unacquainted with the power of in-dwelling sin might suspect that this man, who was remarkably strict and circumspect in his manners from youth, must have been a man of gross wickedness.

* Αγ. [or 33.] † [Αε. or 35.] ‡ Αr. [36.]
§ Με. [42.] ‖ ϟ. [90.]

For similar reasons, St. Paul, on account of the strong description of his internal corruptions, in the seventh chapter to the Romans, has been thought to have been speaking only of his life before conversion, though he evidently speaks of himself at the time of writing. It was deep humility of soul, and a large acquaintance with the propensity of the natural heart itself, which led both of them to describe themselves as so very evil. The difference is, that Ephraim's inferior knowledge of gospel-grace, prevented his attainment of that strength and joy, in which the Apostle abounded. Yet his faith, clouded as the grounds of it were, was sound. "I know that the multitude of his mercies exceeds the multitude of my sins. In baptism he hath given me remission of sins; yet I need to be healed of sins committed after baptism; but he who raised the dead is able to heal me also." * Is not this the very frame of an humbled soul, bowed down with in-dwelling corruption? "I desire to rise, but cannot; the weight of sin presses me down. I see, but I walk in much darkness. I move my hand, but I am as a paralytic." †

In his last will and testament, his humility appears mixed with superstition and dejection of spirit. A mind like his, truly sensible of sin, and not fully and steadily discerning the Lord Jesus, its only righteousness, will flee to vain refuges. Thus Ephraim has some recourse to prayers and offerings to be made for him after his decease. The value of clear Christian light hence appears inexpressible. ‡

His reverence toward the blessed God appears in a book which he wrote against those, who would pretend to search out the nature of the Son of God. In the second chapter § he says, "Unhappy, miserable, and most impudent is he, who desires to search out his Maker. Innumerable myriads of angels glorify with reverence, and trembling adore: while men of clay, full of sins, dispute without fear, concerning the divinity. Their body trembles not, their mind is not disconcerted; but, secure and loquacious, they speak of Christ the Son of God, who suffered for me an unworthy sinner, and of his two-fold generation: nor do they feel how blind they are in the light."

* ϟε. [95.] † ϟθ. [99.] ‡ τξε [365, and 6.]

§ See Dr. Owen's Preface to his Χρ στολογια.

The remarks which might be made on this holy man have been anticipated, for the most part. Undoubtedly the best state of Christianity is that of a saint, humbled under a sense of sin all his days, yet rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and bringing forth fruit with charity and patience. This requires an evangelical knowledge, both of the Law and of the Gospel. And an experimental acquaintance with this science is generally very simple and strong, in both its parts, under the effusion of the Holy Spirit. On the declension of this, toward the latter end of the third century, a lower form of Christianity, even in real saints, obtained; and our history is still travelling through the twilight. The taste of this lower form was to know the Law in its spirituality, but not the gospel in its consolations. Of this form was Ephraim, one of the most holy men in this period; and I scarcely have found a saint who had better views, since the days of Cyprian, unless we except Ambrose of Milan. But by far the greater part of really good men, in this whole century, and in the latter part of the last, lived comparatively, in bondage, looking to Jesus, sincerely, though confusedly. One person, however, was training up under the special guidance of God, in the latter part of this century, whose superior light was appointed to illuminate the next, as we shall see by and bye. But how does the piety, the humility, the conscientiousness of such men as Ephraim, with all their abject superstition, rebuke the pride and carelessness and levity of many now evangelized in the head, and not in the heart, who trifle with the light, and live in sin, because they conceive grace to abound!

Ephraim died about A.D. 379.

I shall dismiss this saint, after I have taken a little notice of one of his companions named Abraham, whose life he has written, and whom he admires extremely. For fifty years he lived an Ascetic, in the strictest observation of monastic rules, and confined himself principally to his cell; though the intelligent reader will think he acted most like a Christian in those intervals, when he left it; in one of them particularly, to which alone I shall confine my attention. There was a great desert in the neighbourhood of the city (Edessa, I suppose) in which the inhabitants were all idolaters to a man; * and though

Abraham the Ascetic.

* Ικθ. (222.)

many presbyters and deacons had been sent to them by the bishop of the city, yet they had all returned without effect, unable to bear the persecution of the Pagans. One day, the bishop observed among his clergy, that he knew of no person so devoted to God as Abraham, and therefore he would ordain him as an evangelist of these Pagans. At first he entreated him, but in vain; Abraham begged to be permitted to bemoan his own evils. The bishop, however, insisting on the obedience which he owed to authority, and observing how much better it was to be employed in the salvation of many, than of one soul only, Abraham at length submitted. He began his work with fervent prayer for the divine blessing, and having erected a church, he supplicated in it, for the conversion of the people. His next step appears not so proper; he threw down the altars and idols of the Pagans; the consequence of which was, that, with much ill usage, he was expelled from the country. He returned, however, to the village, and resumed his work of prayer in the church, to the astonishment of the Pagans. When these came to him from time to time, he began to exhort them to turn from idols to the living God, on which he was worse treated than before. For three years, he bore their insults and a constant series of persecution. His patience, however, and meekness, were admirable, and at length the people began to be softened, and comparing his preaching with his practice, they concluded that God must be with him, and offered themselves voluntarily to receive his doctrine. The saint, rejoicing at the event, desired them to give glory to God, who had enlightened the eyes of their hearts to know him. In fine, he gathered them into a church, daily opening to them the Scriptures. At length, when he saw them confirmed in the faith of the Gospel, and bringing forth the fruits of it with steadiness, he abruptly retired from them to his former solitude. The work, however, remained firm and strong, and the bishop visited and exhorted them from the word of God, and ordained pastors from among themselves.

How much better would Abraham have been thus employed during the fifty years of his solitude! But such were the times. While the world proceeded in its usual wicked-

ness, those who were best calculated to reform it had a strong tendency to live a recluse life; and false fear and bondage kept many from the pastoral office, who might have been its brightest ornaments. The mischief of this was inexpressible; the extension of the Gospel was checked; and every circumstance showed, that the spirit of God was no longer poured out, in his fulness, among men.

CHAP. XXII.

HILARY OF POICTIERS.

AN account of the life of Hilary is delivered by a person, named Fortunatus, who wrote about two hundred years after him. This biographer, according to the taste of the age, which was still more credulous and superstitious than that of Hilary, is extremely barren in matters which really deserve attention, and is full of prodigies and fictions. The best account of him therefore is to be drawn from his contemporaries, and the ecclesiastical historians, and above all, from his own writings. Of his life and actions little is known, that deserves to be recorded: yet so great a man merits a distinct attention.

He was born at Poictiers in France, and being of a very noble family, and distinguished by a liberal education, he was enabled to throw a lustre on Christianity after he received it. In his book on the Trinity he gives us some account of his conversion.* He seriously considered the folly and vanity of idolatry, and was led to conclude, that its professors could not possibly be competent to lead men to happiness. He contemplated the visible frame of things, and inferred an Omnipotent Eternal Being, as their Maker and Preserver. He observes, that happiness consists not in any external things, nor in the bare knowledge of the first principles of good and evil, but in the knowledge of the true God.† By reading the books of Moses and the Prophets, he found his mind enlightened, and his judgment confirmed in these ideas.‡ The short, but comprehensive account of God, in the book of Exodus, "I am that I am,"

* See Cave's Life of Hilary.

† [Lib. de Trin. l. i. c. 1—14.]

‡ Du Pin.

[illegible] with admiration. When he was carried forward to the New Testament, there he learnt, that there is an eternal Word, the Son of God made man, who came into the world to communicate to it the fulness of grace. His hope of happiness was now enlarged: "since the Son of God was made man, men may become the sons of God. A man, who with gladness receives this doctrine, renews his spirit by faith, and conceives a hope full of immortality. Having once learned to believe the Gospel, he rejects captious difficulties, and no longer judges after the maxims of the world. He now neither fears death, nor is weary of life, and presses forward to a blessed immortality." In such a manner does Hilary give us the history of his own mind in religion. And when he enters on the subject of the Trinity, he gives an excellent admonition; humility at least will think so, though pride will object to it. It is, that the reader would think of God according to the light of faith, and agreeably to the testimony of God himself, divesting his mind of the meanness of human opinions. "For," continues he, "the chief qualification required in a reader is, that he be willing to take the sense of an Author from what he reads, and not give him one of his own. He ought not to endeavour to find, in the passages which he reads, that, which he presumed ought to be there. In such passages as describe the character of the Supreme Being particularly, he ought at least to be persuaded, that God knew himself."[a] And in another part of the same treatise, he makes this observation: "The blasphemies of the heresies oblige us to do those things which are forbidden us, to search into mysteries unscrutable, to speak things ineffable, and to explain that which we are not permitted to examine. And instead of performing with a sincere faith that which is commanded us (which were otherwise sufficient) namely, to worship the Father and the Son, and to be filled with the Spirit, we are obliged to employ our weak reasonings

[a] [illegible] this method had been followed in all ages, there never would have been found any one to oppose the doctrine of the Trinity. Instead of this, I suppose that Hilary, in the study of the Scriptures, has [illegible] and usually retained the Nicene faith, before he had the least [illegible] of every thing, [illegible] Arian controversy.
— Lardner, ii. 5.

in explaining things incomprehensible." Every sincere believer, in every age, has had occasion to make the same remark, when called to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

His views of the Three Persons in the Trinity are remarkably perspicuous and scriptural. In speaking of the Holy Spirit, he says, that He enlightens our understandings;* that he is the author of all grace, and will be with us to the end of the world; that he is our comforter here while we live in expectation of a future life, the earnest of our hopes, the light of our minds, and the [glory]† of our souls. He directs us to pray for this Holy Spirit, to enable us to do good, and to persevere in faith and obedience.

There will be no occasion to take any further notice of his writings, unless it be to mention his addresses to the emperor on the same subject. Two he wrote with decency and moderation: in the third, he appears evidently to smart under the wounds of persecution, and treats the prince with an unchristian asperity, for which no other apology can be made, than the same which must be made for Athanasius, namely, "that oppression maketh a wise man mad." In general, there is a proportion preserved in the church between doctrinal light and holy practice. Sanctification is carried on by the knowledge of the truth. And the superior degree of that knowledge, in the first and second century, will account for the superior degree of Christian meekness and charity, in those, who suffered for the Gospel, compared with the practice of the saints of the fourth century.

Hilary, after his conversion, was singularly exemplary in his attachment to the Gospel, avoiding any appearance of countenancing the fashionable heresies, and employed himself in recommending his religion to others. He was married, and had by his wife a daughter called Abra, whose education he superintended with great exactness. The gradual progress of superstition may be remarked from this case. He certainly cohabited with his wife after he was appointed bishop of Poictiers, and yet he stronly recommended his daughter to devote herself wholly to the service of Christ by a state of virginity. To relate his active employment in the Arian controversy, would be again to

* [Lib. ii. c. 29—35.] † [Splendor.]

introduce a subject with which the reader has been already satiated. Suffice it to say, that he spent some time in banishment, in Phrygia, for the sake of a good conscience; that he was at length restored to his see; and that by his lenity on the one hand, which provoked the Luciferians, and by his constancy on the other, which offended the Arian emperor, he was yet enabled to be of signal service to the church, and was to the West what Athanasius was to the East, the pillar of orthodoxy. The Latin church, indeed, was never so much infested with Arianism as the Greek; and France, in particular, was through him preserved from the reigning heresy. He died at Poictiers about the year 367. To him the great church at Poictiers is dedicated, and in the midst of the city is a column erected to him, with an inscription, at once expressive of the admiration of his virtues, and of the superstition of those who wrote it.*

Hilary died, A.D. 367. at the age of 80.

CHAP. XXIII.

BASIL OF CÆSAREA.†

Basil, surnamed the Great, on account of his learning and piety, was descended from Christian ancestors, who suffered much during the persecution of Dioclesian.‡ His grandmother Macrina, herself a Confessor for the faith of Christ, and a disciple of Gregory Thaumaturgus, was eminently useful to him, in superintending his education, and fixing his principles. After strict domestic education in Cappadocia, his native country, he travelled for improvement in knowledge, according to the custom of those, whose circumstances enabled them to bear the expense, and came to Athens. Here he met with Gregory Nazianzen, with whom he had a very cordial intimacy. At length, leaving

* Divo Hilario, Urbis propugnatori, fidelissimo, assiduissimo, certissimo, Pictavorum Episcopo.—"To Saint Hilary, the defender of the city, most faithful, assiduous, and certain, the bishop of Poictiers."

† The epistles of Basil still extant, with the writings of his friend Gregory Nazianzen, and the two historians, Socrates and Sozomen, afford materials sufficiently ample for his life. Cave has given us a connected view of his actions, and Du Pin has reviewed his letters.

‡ [Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. tom. 1. p. 319.]

him there, he came to Constantinople, and put himself under the care of the famous Libanius. It is certain, that he was possessed of all the secular learning of the age, and if he had chosen to give himself wholly to the world, he might have shone as much, as superior parts, strong understanding, and indefatigable industry united, can effect. But his mind was under a spiritual influence; he found an emptiness in the most refined enjoyments of literature; even Athens itself, he called a vain felicity. He was led to seek for food for his soul, and in conjunction with Gregory, he studied the works of Origen; and some monuments of their veneration for that learned father are still extant.*

It will scarcely be needful to add, that, by this means, he contracted a taste for exposition, neither the most evangelical nor the most perspicuous. In his travels into Egypt he conversed with monks and hermits, and prepared himself for that excessive attachment to the spirit of Ascetics, which afterwards made him the great supporter and encourager of those superstitions.

It is my duty, however, to look for the spouse of Christ, wherever I can find her, although she may be disguised by unsuitable and foreign garb. Julian the apostate had known him, when they studied together at Athens, and being now advanced to the empire, he invited Basil to his court. But the fear of God, and the love of heavenly things, which undoubtedly predominated in this saint, suffered him not to give way to the temptation for a moment. He wrote with Christian sincerity to the emperor, and provoked him by his faithful rebukes; choosing rather to live in Cæsarea a despised Christian, than to share in the honours and riches of the court, to which his uncommon endowments and abilities would have advanced him.

After some time, he lived in retirement at Neocæsarea in Pontus, and by his example, concurring with the spirit of the times, he not only drew over his friend Gregory, but also great numbers, to embrace a retired life, and to employ themselves in prayer, singing of psalms, and devotional exercises.† And here, these two friends formed the

* Viz. The Philocalia of Origen, consisting of Scriptural Questions, and Origen's Comments, which these two friends compiled. [Greg. Naz. Ep. 87. tom. 1. p. 843, and Soz. vi. c. 17.]

† [Greg. Naz. Ep. 9. tom. 1. p. 774.]

rules of monastic discipline, which were the basis of all those superstitious institutions which afterwards overran the church. The want of a more evangelical view of doctrine, and of course of that lively faith which would animate and enable the Christian to live above the world, though in the midst of it, was, doubtless, the principal cause of the overflowing of this spirit among real good men in these times. To flee from society seemed to them the only possible way to escape the pollutions of the world, which they sincerely abhorred. Self-righteousness and ignorance fomented the evil, which gradually degenerated into a vapid system of formality, and at length became a sink of secret wickedness. But he, who should, in these times, suspect the generality of monks of hypocrisy and profligacy, would injure them much. On the contrary, the flower of the flock of Christ, in these days, is to be looked for among them.

While Basil was employed in founding monasteries in the neighbouring parts, he also caused hospitals to be erected for the poor; and as he had been ordained priest before he left Cæsarea, he was useful in preaching up and down the country.*

Returning, after a time, to Cæsarea, he distinguished himself by inducing the rich to supply the necessities of the poor during a grievous famine,† and all the world gave him credit both for his charity in relieving the distressed, and for his integrity in resisting the importunities of Valens the Arian emperor.

The see of Cæsarea being vacant, the authority of the aged Gregory,‡ bishop of Nazianzum, the father of his friend, was sincerely exerted for his promotion; and to this see he was at length advanced, notwithstanding the opposition of the Arians. He was soon called to withstand the repeated attacks of Valens,§ and though he was in the utmost danger of being banished from his see, he remained immoveable in the profession of the faith.

Let us attend a little to the pastoral character of Basil. He found that the church of Cæsarea, before his time, had been scandalously neglected in its discipline.‖ Officers,

* [Rufin. Hist. l. xi. c. 9.]

† [Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. tom. 1. p. 340—2.] ‡ [Ibid p. 342-3.]

§ [Theodoret iv. c. 19. Socrat. iv. c. 26. Soz. vi. c. 16.]

‖ [Basil. Ep. 181. tom. 2. p. 959.]

who were a disgrace to religion, ministered in the church, and the subaltern superintendents* ordained men without the knowledge of the bishop, and without any just examination; and many pressed into the ministry for mere secular reasons: it was reported that some were even guilty of selling the priesthood for money, the crime usually known by the name of simony. Basil reminded his clergy of the strictness of the primitive discipline, and of the care formerly exercised by the presbyters and deacons in examining the lives and manners of the persons to be ordained: and he made earnest attempts to revive the laudable customs, inveighing against simony as most detestable.†

It would be tedious to describe the diverse contests in which Basil was engaged. Calumny, malice, and the domineering power of Arianism, afflicted him with various trials, in which his patience was unwearied; and as his body became enfeebled by increasing distempers, his mind seems to have collected more vigour.‡ Finding himself rapidly declining, after he had governed the church of Cæsarea eight years and some months, he ordained some of his followers, and was then obliged to take to his bed. The people flocked about his house, sensible of the value of such a pastor. For a time he discoursed piously to those who were about him, and sealed his last breath with the ejaculation, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit!"

It is much to be lamented, that a man so sincerely pious, so profoundly learned, and of so elegant and accomplished a genius, should have suffered so much, both in mind and body, from the monastic spirit. But his excessive austerities broke his constitution, and left him, for years, in a very imperfect state of health. He died in the year 379.

Basil died, A.D. 379, aged 51.

His doctrine appears, from his works, to be too much clouded with self-righteous and superstitious mixtures, to contribute materially to the instruction and the consolation of sincere souls, though it is evident, that he reverenced the influences of the Holy Spirit, and placed his hope of salvation in Christ Jesus. Hear how Basil speaks of

* Chorepiscopi. A sort of under-bishops in great dioceses.
† [Basil. Ep. 76. tom. 2. p. 884.]
‡ [Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. tom. 1. p. 370-1.]

faith. "Faith, above all natural methods, draws the soul to a firm acquiescence in the word: Faith, which is the effect, not of geometrical conclusions, but the result of the energy of the Spirit." * So clearly spiritual was his religion, with all its imperfections! To this testimony of Basil concerning divine faith, as distinct from that which is merely natural, it may be proper to add that of [Nemesius de hominis naturâ,] another Greek father, whose time seems not far remote from Basil's. "The doctrine of the divine oracles hath its credibility from itself, because of its divine inspiration." † On one subject, namely, the love of heavenly things in opposition to earthly, he excelled, both in precept and example. In this, the power of grace appeared in him through life, and even the whole system of his errors in divinity was connected with it. The very principle of the ascetic life was with Basil a supreme desire to live above the world. Those who understand the foundation of the Gospel better than he did, may find it not amiss to attend to such pathetic exhortations as these:

"One says,‡ I will give to-morrow, to excuse himself from giving to-day.§ Alas! do you know whether you shall be alive to-morrow? Another says, I am poor, I have need enough myself of all my means. Yes, you are poor, you are destitute, but it is of love, of benignity, of faith, and of [hope for eternity.] A third says, whom do I wrong? I keep only my own. I ask you, from whom did you receive those riches, and whence did you bring them? Did you not come naked from your mother's womb, and shall you not return naked to the dust? Whence did this wealth come? from chance? what is this but Atheism? if you confess that you received it from God, why did it fall to your lot rather than to another's? God is not unrighteous in the unequal division of property among men. Why are you rich, and why is this man poor? it is, that you may receive the reward of dispensing your goods faithfully, and that the poor may receive the recompence of his patience. When, therefore, you appropriate to yourself that wealth which belongs to many, and of which you are the steward, you are a robber.—We know not what neces-

* Basil on Psalm cxv. [at the beginning.] † [c. 2. prope finem.]
‡ Basil's Homilies. Du Pin. § [Hom. in Luc. c. 12. v. 18. tom. 1. p. 391.

sities may happen.* Can you make this apology, while you spend your wealth on a thousand superfluities?—But I want it for my children.—But, is it from you, that your son received life? is it not from God? ought he, then, to hinder you from obeying God's commandments? The riches that you will leave him, may be the occasion of his ruin. Who knows, whether he will make a good or a bad use of them?"—The pretences of those, who think to exempt themselves from doing good in their lifetime, by leaving their goods, by will, to the poor, he thus refutes: "Wretched men, to practise no good works, but with ink and paper! It seems, you wish you could have enjoyed your riches for ever, and then you would never have obeyed the precepts of the Gospel: it is to death, it seems and not to you, that the poor are indebted. God will not be thus mocked; that which is dead is not to be offered to the sanctuary: offer up a living sacrifice."—It is certain, that those, who rely on Divine Providence, are like the springs which are not dried up by drawing from them, but send forth their waters with greater force. If you are poor, lend your money upon interest to God, who is rich.†

Different vices predominate in different periods. If, by reviewing various ages, I can gain a more enlarged way of thinking, and cease to admire exclusively that in which I live, this will be one advantage of my historical travel. Certain it is, that the present age is remarkable for a selfish and narrow mode of conception, and a contempt of antiquity. How many, whose reading has scarcely reached further than a Monthly Review or Magazine, are apt to felicitate themselves on their exemption from superstition, and to deride all monks as perfect fools! If we conceive a man in Basil's days, possessed of the same contracted spirit, and capable of foreseeing the excessively mercantile taste of the present race of men; would not he be disposed to censure their covetousness? and would not the vice appear as ridiculous to such a one, as superstition does to the moderns? Is it not as absurd and foolish in its nature? —The wisdom of man lies not in satirizing the vices of others, but in correcting his own.

* [Hom. ad Divites tom. 1. p. 393, &c.]
† [Hom. in temp. fam. et. Siccit. tom. 1. p. 416.]

CHAP XXIV.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

He was born at Arianzum,* an obscure village belonging to Nazianzum in Cappadocia, and came into the world about the time of the Nicene council.† His father, of the same name, a person of rank, had been brought up among a particular sect, most resembling the Samaritans, who professed a mixture of Judaism and Paganism.‡ To this opinion, as it had been the religion of his family, Gregory the elder was in early life extremely devoted. But marrying a lady of rank, and of sincere Christian piety, he was gradually induced to attend to the doctrines of the Gospel. Her prayers and persuasions were equally ardent. Gregory the elder dreaming one night, that he sung that passage, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord," and feeling an uncommon pleasure on the occasion, informed his wife of the circumstance, who exhorted him to comply with the call of God to his soul. And soon after, Leontius, bishop of Cæsarea, coming to Nazianzum, in his way to the council of Nice, Gregory the elder was encouraged and assisted by him, and then received from the bishop of Nazianzum catechetical instruction, and the ordinance of baptism.

Nazianzum itself had but newly received Christianity.§ The bishop who baptized Gregory the elder, was the first of its pastors, and died soon after. A long vacancy took place, and the town was overrun with ignorance and vice. Gregory the elder at length was appointed to the see, which he filled for forty-five years with great success among the people.‖ His son, Gregory the younger, the famous Gregory, usually called Gregory Nazianzen, making uncommon advances in learning, in several seminaries, went

* [Nicet. Argument. in Naz. Orat. 15. tom. 2. p. 645.]

† Though I have consulted Socrates and Sozomen, yet the account of Cave is so full and circumstantial, and so well supported by original authorities, that I shall have little occasion to do any thing more than to abridge the life of Gregory, written by the latter, except to avail myself of the industry of Du Pin, when I make a few remarks on the works of this Father.

‡ [Greg. Naz. Orat. 19. tom. 1. p. 289—94.] § [Ibid p. 296.]

‖ [Greg. Naz. Orat. 19. tom. 1. p. 313.]

to Athens, to complete his education. During the voyage, a remarkable providence was made subservient to his conversion.* A storm suddenly arose, and the vessel was for several days in imminent danger. Gregory lamented his want of baptism and of serious Christianity, and with vehement prayers devoted himself to God to be his for ever, if he would be pleased to spare his life at that time. When he had finished his prayer, the tempest ceased, and the ship was securely conducted to her port.

His acquaintance with Basil at Athens has been mentioned. Here also he conversed with Julian † the apostate, and, with that intuitive penetration into character, which seems a peculiar gift of some minds, he foretold what a curse he would one day prove. See, said he, what a pest the Roman empire nourishes in its bowels! Yet Julian, at that time, had done nothing to justify such suspicions. He attended Christian forms; nor was he naturally savage or inhuman. The penetrating eye of Gregory discerned, however, the embryo of the apostate and the scorner, in his bold and fearless spirit of disputation, and in his presumptuous curiosity;—tempers in youth, which, if strong and predominant, and accompanied with quickness of parts, without special grace, seldom fail to produce remarkable fruits of impiety in maturer age, and are rather cherished than damped by sobriety of manners and intenseness of application. Pride converts every specious virtue into nourishment for herself; and Satan knows no agent in the world so proper as pride for the promotion of his kingdom of darkness.

After his baptism,‡ he felt himself strongly inclined to the ascetic life, but was, though reluctant, made a presbyter by his father. The old man, better versed in prayer than disputation, was once imposed on, by Arian subtleties § to communicate with that sect, while he took them to be what they were not, but was recovered from the snare by the arguments of his more learned son. The latter, after giving way for a time to the monastic spirit of solitude, was prevailed on at length to return to Nazianzum, and to

* [Ibid p. 306. et Carm. de vit. suâ p. 3, and 4.]
† [Greg. Naz. Orat. 4. tom. 1. p. 122.]
‡ Vit. Greg. Naz. a Greg. Presbyt.]
§ [Argument. in Orat. 12. tom. 2. p. 632.]

employ himself in a manner more worthy of a Christian, by assisting his aged father in his pastoral cares.

His friend Basil offering him the bishopric of Sasima,* in his diocese of Cæsarea, and the place being very mean and obscure, the pride of Gregory was hurt, and for some time a coolness subsisted between the two friends, both of whom appear not to have possessed, in any great degree, the humble simplicity of better times. Their fondness for Platonism, and their accurate acquaintance with secular learning, had doubtless no tendency to supply the defects of their Christian views of doctrine.

[Gregory at first rejected the offer of Sasima † but subsequently was induced to allow himself to be ordained to it. His Greek Biographer however tells us that he performed no episcopal act there, but that after having, for a time, withdrawn to an hospital that he might indulge his love of retirement, he at length consented to undertake the care of his Father's diocese of Nazianzum, and continued to assist him till his death, he had there] an opportunity of enforcing a Christian duty, constantly allowed to be such in the primitive times, namely, submission to the higher powers, as well as to give the most excellent advice to the governor of Nazianzum ‡ to use his power with moderation. Some civil tumults and broils at that place furnished him with this occasion.

His father dying near a hundred years old, and his mother soon after, both of them persons of uncommon piety, Gregory was induced to go to Constantinople. Here, under the emperor Valens, Arianism was at its height, and Gregory preached to a few Christians in a sort of conventicle:§ but, growing popular and successful, he was at last appointed bishop; and at length, under Theodosius, he was confirmed in the charge. It proved, however, extremely uneasy to him, notwithstanding the kindness of the emperor. His liberality and integrity were indeed admirable, and his private life and manners were most exemplary. But the weakness of his body, the irritability of his temper, and his extreme deficiency in talents for government, rendered him, notwithstanding the just renown of his incomparable oratory, unfit for so public a station.

* [Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. tom. 1. p. 356. et Ep. 31, and 32. p. 795, &c.]

† [A slight addition has here been made to Milner's account.]

‡ [Greg. Naz. Orat. 17. et Argument. a Jac. Billio. tom. 2. p. 683.]

§ [Vit. Greg. Naz. a Greg. Presbyt.]

The Gospel was, however, adorned by his virtues, and particularly, by the meekness with which he forgave a person who had been suborned to murder him, and who, having been baffled in his purpose by Providence, came to him in agony of conscience, and confessed his intentions.*

While he was at Constantinople, the famous council was held there for the settlement of the peace of the church; during the course of which, Gregory, a man of tried honesty, but void of political refinement, found himself so much opposed by those who envied him, and his best designs so much misconstrued, that he entreated Theodosius to accept his resignation. His farewell sermon,† in which he reminded his audience of what God had done by him from his first preaching among them, when he was attacked with stones by the Arians, is a masterpiece of eloquence, and moved the passions of the audience exceedingly. There is in it too great a show of eloquence, and too little of the Gospel of Christ.

A second synod being held at Constantinople, Gregory,‡ disgusted with the treatment he had met with in the first, and being also afflicted with a very infirm state of health, refused to come, and expressed himself with unbecoming acrimony against councils in general. However, he exerted himself sincerely to promote unity in the church, and was unbounded in his liberality to the poor. In his time he was looked on as an admirable theologian. And indeed, in justness of taste, eloquence and secular learning, he was inferior to few; and these shining qualities, in an age more contentious than simple with respect to religion, procured him an admiration for Christian knowledge above his deserts. He died in the year 389, in his own country. Gregory dies, A. D. 389.

His principal writings are his sermons. The first of them describes the difficulties and importance of the pastoral office, blames the forwardness of many to undertake it, and describes himself confounded under a sense of his insufficiency. In two other discourses § he inveighs against Julian in a manner that discovers more of the orator than of the Christian. In another discourse ‖ he endeavours to

* [Carm. de vitâ suâ p. 23.]
† [Orat. 32.]
‡ [Ep. 55, and 76. tom. 1. p. 814, and 830.]
§ [Orat. 3, and 4.]
‖ [Orat. 9.]

reconcile the minds of the people of Nazianzum to the payment of taxes. He observes, that Jesus Christ came into the world at a time when a tax was levied, to show that God is present at such scenes; that he was made man, and did himself pay taxes, to comfort those who were in bondage, and to teach them to bear it patiently; that by thus abasing himself he taught kings to treat their subjects with moderation; that tribute was a consequence of the first sin, because war, the cause of tribute, was the consequence of sin, and a just punishment of God.

His warm and pathetic addresses to deceased saints were evidently little else than mere strokes of oratory. They were accompanied with the expression of a doubt, whether the saints understood what he said. He seems, however, to have strengthened the growing superstition, and encouraged that worship of saints, which he certainly did not intend, in the manner in which it was afterwards practised. Unguarded passages of this sort occur in other writers of these times, none of whom really designed to inculcate idolatry.

In another discourse,* he protests against the too common practice of delaying baptism, which, from the example of Constantine, had grown very fashionable, for reasons equally corrupt and superstitious. Men lived in sin as long as they thought they could safely, and deferred baptism till their near approach to death, under a groundless hope of washing away all their guilt at once. He presses the baptism of infants, and refutes the vain pretences of those who followed the fashionable notions.

His poems demonstrate a rich vein of genius and a sensibility of mind. Nor is there wanting a true spirit of piety. In the fifty-eighth are some excellent reflections on the falsehood of mere human virtue, the necessity of divine grace through Jesus Christ, and of an humble confidence in it, and the danger of perishing through pride and vain glory. An humility of this sort was evidently at the bottom of Gregory's religion; but I much doubt whether his less learned parents did not understand it, practically, much better than he. Mankind are naturally more favourable to gifts than to graces, and even good men are but too ready to suppose there is much of the latter, wherever there appears an abundance of the former.

* [Orat. 40.]

CENTURY V.

CHAP. I.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

Some brief account of this renowned Father will properly introduce the fifth century to the acquaintance of the reader, because the transactions with which his story is connected extend a few years from the last century into this, and are very descriptive of the religious state of the East at that time.

He was, at the commencement of the century, bishop of Constantinople, where the emperor Arcadius resided, while his brother Honorius reigned in the West: these two were the sons and successors of the great Theodosius. But we must look back to the rise of John Chrysostom. He was born at Antioch * about the year 354. His parents were persons of some rank, and by the care of his mother (for he lost his father soon after his birth †) his education was attended to in a very particular manner. By her means, he had the advantage of being early prejudiced in favour of Christianity. Yet, being naturally studious of eloquence, he devoted himself to the care of that great master, Libanius of Antioch, who being one day asked, who would be capable of succeeding him in his school; "John," said he, "if the Christians had not stolen him from us." So great was the idea he had formed of his powers of eloquence.

Chrysostom born, A. D. 354.

He prognosticated right. It would be easy to produce abundance of instances of his oratorical abilities. I wish it were in my power to record as many of his evangelical excellences.

Having pleaded a little time in the Forum, he began to find a vacancy in his mind not to be supplied by secular

* Cave's Life of this Father. [Socrat. vi. c. 3. Soz. viii. c. 2.]
† [De Sacerdotio l. i. c. 2.]

arts and studies. The Spirit of God seems, from that time, to have drawn him to study the Scriptures, and one material advantage he derived from his master Diodorus, who was afterwards bishop of Tarsus: By him he was taught to forsake the popular whims of Origen, and to investigate the literal and historical sense of the Divine word; a practice, in which he differed from most of the fathers of his times.

He contracted an intimate friendship with one Basil, whom, by a deceit, he drew into the acceptance of a bishopric; nor is he ashamed to justify himself in doing evil that good may come.* We have seen the deliberate fraud practised by Ambrose to avoid a bishopric.† And I find Chrysostom, in his exposition of the second chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, supposes, that both Paul and Peter were laudably engaged in fraud, because their views were charitable and pious. We shall afterwards have occasion to consider this matter a little more fully, when we come to the controversy between Jerom and Augustine on the subject. At present, suffice it to observe, that the decline in doctrine had evidently produced a decline in ethics; that the examples of men, otherwise so justly reputable, as Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Jerom,‡ must have had a pernicious effect on Christian morals; and that the growth of austere superstition was unfavourable to truth and integrity.

Notwithstanding the entreaties of his pious mother, he lived in monastic austerities for some time; after which, Flavian, bishop of Antioch, promoted him to the office of presbyter in his diocese.§ About the year 379, a sedition broke out at Antioch, on account of taxes, and the people dragged about the streets the statues of Theodosius, and of his excellent lady Flaccilla, and of their two sons, in contempt. But finding afterwards the danger of the emperor's resentment, this inconstant and turbulent people were in the

Sedition at Antioch, A. D. 379.

* Sacerdotio, b. i. c. 3. † See page 6 of this Volume.

‡ The reader will carefully observe, that Augustine is not involved in this censure, in the least degree. Let it be observed also, that these pious frauds had no connexion with the love of lucre, and arose more properly from superstition, than from hypocrisy.

§ [Palladii Dial. de vit. Ch[illegible]

greatest distress. Antioch had ever been very favourable to the name, at least, of Christianity, since the time that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. But luxury and the love of the world, were, it is to be feared, much more common in these times than godliness, even among the Christian inhabitants. About two hundred thousand citizens made up the sum total; and half of these were Christians. John failed not to improve the opportunity. Serious as he himself was in Christian views, so far as he understood them, and excellent as a preacher of the law, he exhorted them to repentance, and very properly made the awful suspense they were then in, an instructive emblem of our expectation of the day of Judgment. Hymns and litanies were composed to solicit God to move the heart of the emperor to pity; and many, who had never attended the house of God, and had spent their whole time in the theatre, now joined in divine worship with much earnestness and assiduity. Flavian the bishop, though aged and infirm, undertook a journey to Constantinople to deprecate the wrath of the emperor. Libanius the sophist also did the same; but the generality of the philosophers hid themselves in holes and corners, and did nothing for their country in danger; * while the monks left their cells, and flocked into the city, and entreated the magistrates and judges to behave with lenity. One Macedonius particularly † addressed the Commissioners, and desired them to admonish the emperor not to destroy the image of God, lest he should provoke the Divine Artist; which he might think would be the case, when he reflected how angry he himself was for the sake of brazen statues. Thus, even monks, who exhibited Christianity in a degenerate form, exceeded in benevolence and active virtue the boasted and boasting sons of philosophy!

The spirit of Chrysostom, in the mean time, was softened and overawed with the mingled sensations of pity and devotion, while he observed the severe proceedings of the courts, and the vain intercessions of relations for husbands and fathers.‡ He was led to reflect how awful the day of judgment will be, when not a mother, sister, or father can

* [Hom. 17. de Statuis. Chrysost. Op. tom. 6.]

† Theodoret, b. v. c. 20.

‡ [Hom. 13. de Statuis.]

arrest the course of Divine justice, or give the least relief to nearest relations; and, in his homilies, he with much eloquence and piety enforced these considerations on a giddy, unthinking people. Pastors may take the hint from hence to improve temporal scenes to the spiritual benefit of their audiences.

The generous and good-natured Theodosius expostulated with Flavian on the unreasonableness and ingratitude of the citizens of Antioch to himself, who had ever been as a parent and benefactor to them.* Flavian admitting the truth of his observations, and confessing the aggravated guilt of the city, pressed him with the divine rule, If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. And his pathetic and pious admonitions prevailed. Theodosius owned, that if the great Lord of the world, for our sake, became a servant, and prayed for his murderers, it highly became himself to forgive his fellow-servants; and with great tenderness he solicited the bishop to hasten his return, and to deliver the citizens from their fears. In the meantime the active charity of the monks and clergy had prevailed on the judges to suspend their proceedings till they heard from the emperor; and Flavian himself returned at length with the news of the city being fully restored to his favour. These are some of the triumphs of the Gospel. Its mild influence on society, in the suppression of the fights of gladiators and other savage practices, and in the kind and liberal behaviour of emperors towards their subjects, even in times when true religion was at no great height, demonstrate, not only that states act unwisely, when they venture to reject Christianity altogether, and to substitute mere ethics in its stead; but also, that it is the duty of governors and legislators, as much as in them lies, by positive institutions to promote the knowledge and influence of that divine religion.

In the year 398, Chrysostom,† by the advice of Eutropius, chief chamberlain of the palace, was appointed bishop of Constantinople, being hurried thither by a fraudulent scheme, such as he himself had approved in like cases. The emperor Arcadius, a character of the most insipid insignificance, fixed

Made Bishop of Constantinople, A.D. 398.

* [Hom. 20. de Statuis.] † [Soz. viii. c. 2, and 3, Socrat. vi. c. 2, and 4.]

in the metropolitical chair a person of great integrity, activity, and virtue indeed; but surely not through any wisdom of his own. John began immediately to attempt the reformation of his diocese.* He put an end to a custom of the clergy of keeping matrons in their families, which caused much scandal; he censured their covetousness and their luxury; retrenched the expenses of the bishop's table, and applied the surplus to the needy; built a large hospital † for the infirm, and put it under the most salutary regulations. Such ministers as refused to amend their lives, he suspended from their offices; and the widows who were maintained by the church, were admonished to abstain from their gay manner of living, or else to marry. And he pressed the laity, whose employments filled up the day, to attend divine worship in the evening.

The common people ‡ heard him gladly, as, for a time at least, they generally will hear, in all ages, a preacher who speaks to the conscience, though severely, yet faithfully, with an earnest desire exhibited in his whole manner to do them good. Even some of the Dissenters attended on his preaching; nor did he labour in vain in reclaiming heretics.§ The clergy, indolent and corrupt as they then were, opposed him vehemently, and watched opportunities against

* [Theodoret v. c. 28. Palladii Dial. de vit. Chrysost. c. 5. p. 45.]

† The superiority of Christianity, considered in an ethical and political point of view, to all other religions, may deserve to be an object of attention. We have seen great proofs of it already. It is difficult to prove a negative proposition; I can only say, therefore, that I do not recollect any such humane and beneficent provisions for the poor in the whole circle of ancient Paganism; nor do I remember any one of the philosophers, who was ever sedulously employed, by word or deed, for the lower ranks of men. True religion visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction. With justice might Ambrose, observing the liberality which the church exercised to the needy, ask the Pagans, Let them tell me, what captives were redeemed, what hospitals maintained, what exiles provided for, by the income of the temples?

‡ [Soz. viii. c. 5. Socrat. vi. c. 5.]

§ A visible reformation of manners in a capital, which had long suffered under Arian impiety, and had fallen into a general relaxation of discipline, attended his labours. Persons, who hitherto had frequented the public shows, now came in crowds to public worship. Here he expounded various parts of the New Testament. He preached three times a week, and sometimes seven days successively. The crowd was so great, that to place himself where he might be heard, he was obliged to sit in the middle of the church, in the reader's desk. He reformed likewise the churches of the neighbouring provinces of Thrace, Asia, and Pontus. It appears that various churches in the East were administered with shameful corruption and profligacy, and several bishops, by the vigour of Chrysostom's zeal, were deposed. [Fleury l. xx. c. 40.]

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him. The wealthy and the great, offended at his plain reproofs, were as ill-disposed as the clergy.* Chrysostom, however, persevered; nor did he confine his cares to Constantinople. In order to overcome the Arianism of the Goths,† he ordained some persons of their country, to whom he assigned a church within the city, and by their industry he reclaimed many. He himself often preached there, and prevailed on others of the clergy to do the same. He made liberal and active attempts to spread the Gospel among barbarous nations, though the troubles which afterwards befel him, must have checked both these and other Christian designs.

In an age of luxury and extreme relaxation of discipline, it might be expected that the uprightness and inflexible integrity of Chrysostom would expose him to many inconveniences. During the negligent administration of his predecessor Nectarius, the successor of Gregory Nazianzen, a remarkable alteration for the worse, in point of discipline, had taken place. There had been a presbyter, whose special office it was to receive the confession of penitents, and by his authority they were admitted to the communion. Superstition, most probably, had guided too much the formalities of this discipline; but profaneness was still worse, and the Lord's Supper was now open to all sorts of characters, no other rules being prescribed than what men chose to impose on themselves. It was not in the power of Chrysostom, in a metropolis so dissolute, and so much under the secular influence, to restore the discipline of the church in this respect. What was wanting, he supplied by preaching with the most laudable energy, and he exhorted men to repent again and again, and then to attend the Lord's Supper. He was evidently speaking of private, not of public penitence. Yet his expressions were perversely interpreted by two sorts of men, of very opposite characters, —the Novatians, and the more dissolute persons of the general church. The former still maintained their favourite point, of never receiving the lapsed at all; the latter accused him of giving a license to sin. Yet if the distinction between private and public penitence be attended to, the innocence of Chrysostom's expressions will be sufficiently

* [Soz. viii. c. 8, and 9.] † [Theodoret. v. c. 30.]

clear, and he will appear to have only exhorted them to repentance on the encouragement of the divine mercies in Christ, which offer pardon to repeated and multiplied transgressions. With what malevolence this great man was treated by the dissolute, may be easily conceived, when so grave a person as Socrates the historian, who had a partial fondness for Novatianism, expresses his wonder that Chrysostom should have given such encouragement to sin, in his sermons, and have contradicted the canons of the church, which had been made with the excessive rigour that characterized the third century, and had forbidden the indulgence of communion to be granted any more than once to offenders.* Nor is this the only instance in which the zeal and uprightness of good men exposes them, in a malignant world, to the censure of opposite characters; of those, who carry the profession of strictness too far, and of those, who scarcely pretend to any at all. Chrysostom was accused, on this account, by the profligate bishops, and was also censured by Sisinnius, bishop of the Novatians in Constantinople, who wrote a book against him, and censured him with great severity.

Of this Sisinnius I shall not record what Socrates thinks it worth while to spend one chapter upon.† For, though he evidently desires to interest the reader in his favour, he records nothing but what tends to show him to have been a polite, facetious, well-bred gentleman, who made himself very agreeable to all parties, and was a contrast to the severity of Chrysostom by his engaging manners. He survived the latter, and lived on terms of amity with Atticus his successor; and I should with pleasure recite an account of his pious labours and success in the ministry, could I find any real proof that he was endowed with the spirit of the Gospel, and exhibited it in his conduct. Though the article of dress is but an external thing, his wearing white garments, against the mode of the times, when the clergy were habited in black, was certainly indecent; nor is his saying, that there was no scripture which required the wearing of black, a satisfactory apology.

It is not from such courtly characters as these, that reformation in the Church, in an age of corruption, like that

* Socrat. b. vi. 21. † Chap. 22.

at the beginning of this century, is to be expected. Chrysostom was, doubtless, endowed with many qualities which belong to a reformer. Socrates owns his extreme temperance, and at the same times blames him for the vice of anger, and the charge seems but too just.

This infirmity, too common to men of generous and noble minds, gave, no doubt, great advantage to his enemies, and concurred with various circumstances to crush the bishop of Constantinople. A synod at length, held and managed by Theophilus bishop of Alexandria, his determined enemy, and one of the worst ecclesiastical characters in history, supported by the influence of the proud Eudoxia, the empress, condemned him with extreme injustice. I shall not stain these pages with a detail of their iniquitous proceedings.* It is more to our purpose to notice his conduct under the severe persecution.

Chrysostom, foreseeing the effect of the storm which was gathering round him, addressed himself to the bishops, who were his friends, assembled in the great room of his house.† "Brethren, be earnest in prayer; and if you love our Lord Jesus, let none of you for my sake desert his charge. For, as was St. Paul's case, 'I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand.' I see I must undergo many hardships, and then quit this troublesome life. I know the subtilty of Satan, who cannot bear to be daily tormented with my preaching; [thus may] you find mercy at the hand of God; remember me in your prayers." The assembly being afflicted with vehement sorrow, he besought them to moderate their grief; "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I always told you that this life is a road in which joys and sorrows both pass swiftly away. The visible scene of things before us is like a fair, we buy and sell, and sometimes recreate ourselves.‡ Are we bet-

* Among the other charges, he was accused of saying, "If thou sinnest again, repent again; and as oft as thou sinnest, come to me again, and I will heal thee." This is the calumny already spoken to. That he spoke contemptibly of the clergy, and had written a whole book stuffed with falsehood against them: these also were among the articles of accusation, which, in general, betray the folly and malice of his enemies, and are more than sufficiently confuted by the piety and godly zeal, which appear in his writings still extant.

† Cave's Life of Chrysostom, Pallad. [Dial. de] vitâ Chrysost. p. 67.

‡ [The words of the original are ἠγοράσαμεν, ἐπωλήσαμεν, καταλύομεν.]

ter than the patriarchs? Do we excel the prophets and apostles, that we should live here for ever?" When one of the company passionately bewailed the desolations of the Church, the bishop, striking the end of his right fore-finger on the palm of his left hand (which he was accustomed to do, when much in earnest) said, "Brother, it is enough, pursue the subject no further; however, as I requested, desert not your churches. As for the doctrine of Christ, it began not with me, nor shall it die with me. Did not Moses die? and did not Joshua succeed him?—Paul was beheaded, and left he not Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and many more behind him?"

Eulysius bishop of Apamea answered, "But if we keep our churches, we shall be compelled to communicate and subscribe." "Communicate," returns he, "you may, that you make not a schism in the Church,* but subscribe not the decrees; for I am not conscious of having done any thing, for which I should deserve to be deposed."

As Theophilus assumed a power which doubtless belonged not to him, and as Chrysostom observed, it did not become a man that lives in Egypt to judge one that lives in Thrace,† the bishop of Constantinople refused to own the authority of the court. His enemies deposed him for contumacy, and to support their views, they informed the emperor Arcadius, that he had been guilty of treason; meaning the affront he had put on the empress in calling her Jezebel; and it is not improbable, but that he had, in some of his sermons, compared her to the wife of Ahab, whom, in truth, she much resembled in pride and cruelty.

* In this he doubtless acted with great propriety. Corrupt as the Eastern church then was, the corruption was rather in practice than in doctrine. And such a separation as afterwards took place at the Reformation, would have been very unjustifiable. Good men by remaining in it might do a thousand times more good, than they would be capable of doing by deserting it. And so long as the doctrine itself is preserved sound and pure, by the continuance of holy men in the church, who in that case can remain with a clear conscience, revivals may be expected from time to time. Of this we shall shortly see a solid instance in the Western church, and such we have seen in the church of England in our own times. Separation seems only justifiable in the case of a total corruption and incurable malady, such as that at the time of the Reformation. Hasty and intemperate schisms rend the church into miserable fragments, prevent as far as man can prevent, any great and general revival of godliness, and are strongly guarded against in the epistolary writings of the New Testament.

† [Chrysost. Ep. 122. ad Innocent. tom. 7. p. 154, &c.]

The people of Constantinople,* however, who sincerely loved the bishop, insisted on his being heard by more equitable judges, and so strong was their agitation, that Chrysostom, fearing a popular insurrection, delivered himself up secretly to the officer, who came to execute the imperial warrant against him. He was conveyed immediately to a port in the Black Sea. As soon as it was known that he was gone, the whole city was in an uproar; many blamed the emperor, who, in so weak a manner, had given up the most upright of men to the malice of his wife, and of Theophilus. The tumult was at length so violent, that Eudoxia herself, frighted at the danger, pressed her husband to recal him, and even wrote to Chrysostom a letter full of protestations of sorrow and respect. Chrysostom was, therefore, restored to his bishopric. But the calm season lasted not long. A silver statue of the empress was solemnly erected in the street just before the great church of St. Sophia.† It was dedicated with many heathenish extravagances; and the people used to meet there in sports and pastimes, to the distraction of the congregation. The bishop, impatient of these things, blamed them from the pulpit, and with great imprudence began his sermon after this manner: "Now again Herodias raves and is vexed, again she dances, again she desires John's head in a charger." ‡

The enemies of the bishop could not desire a greater advantage. And they improved it to the utmost. Numbers were ready to gratify the resentment of Eudoxia. And Arcadius, overcome by importunity, again ordered his deposition. He was suspended and confined; His friends and followers were dispersed, rifled, killed, or imprisoned.§ Edicts were issued, severely threatening all that refused to renounce communion with Chrysostom. It was the season of Easter, when the catechumens, who had been instructed, were to receive baptism. The friends of Chrysostom fled

* [Soz. viii. c. 18. Socrat. vi. c. 15, and 16.]

† [Soz. viii. c. 20. Socrat. vi. c. 18.]

‡ The rashness of Chrysostom in this affair was so great, that I could not easily believe this account. But I see the truth of the story is confirmed by the authority both of Socrates and Zozomen, and on consulting them it does not appear that any apology can be made for the bishop. He certainly mixed not the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove.

§ [Chrysost Ep. 122. ad Innocent.]

into the fields to keep the festival there. The emperor himself went out that day into a meadow adjoining to the city, and espied a field covered with white. These were the catechumens, who had been baptized the night before, and had then their white garments upon them, being near three thousand in number. The emperor, being told that they were a conventicle of heretics, ordered a party of soldiers to disperse them. Several women of quality were very rudely treated on this occasion, and numbers were imprisoned and scourged. Receiving at length a warrant, signed by the emperor, to depart, Chrysostom exhorted the deaconesses * to continue their care of the church, and to communicate with the bishop who should be chosen by common consent, in his room,† and he retired once more from his See, in the year 404.

Chrysostom retires from his See.

Arsacius, ‡ brother of Nectarius, being appointed bishop in his stead, the friends of Chrysostom, in opposition to the advice which he had given them, refused to submit, and formed separate assemblies, and were severely persecuted by the name of Joannites. Among these friends was an opulent lady, called Olympias,§ who had honoured him abundantly, and appears to have profited much by his ministry. She had acted in the church as a deaconess, and was now banished to Nicomedia, whence she supplied the exiled prelate with money. Here she lived many years, an example of piety.

Arsacius is made Bishop in his stead, A. D. 404.

Chrysostom himself was conveyed to Cucusus in Armenia, a barren cold region, infested with robbers, and mournfully marked already with the murder of Paul, the former bishop of Constantinople. His journey to this place was attended with many grievous hardships, though sweetened with the compassionate care of various persons, who keenly sympathized with injured innocence. At Cucusus, however, he met with very generous treatment. Here he preached frequently to a people who heard him gladly. A grievous famine raging in those parts, he was enabled, by the libe-

Chrysostom is conveyed to Cucusus in Armenia.

* [Palladii Dial. c. 10. p. 90.]

† Hence it is evident, that the appearance of a popular election of bishops was still kept up at Constantinople; but it could only be the appearance.

‡ [Soz. viii. c. 23.] § [Palladii Dial. c. 15. p. 149, &c.]

rality of Olympias, to relieve the poor.* And he redeemed many captives which had been taken by the Isaurian robbers. He had formerly conceived a plan for converting the Pagans which were still in Phœnicia, and had made some progress in it. But understanding that the design had met with a check, he again made vigorous attempts for the support of so good a work, and ordered sums of money for the erection of churches, and the support of missionaries. He seemed to recover his health for a time, but winter approaching he felt the usual effects of that season on persons of weak constitutions.† His stomach had unhappily received much injury from the austerities of his youth, and never recovered its tone. The next spring he recruited, but was always obliged to observe the strictest regimen.‡

At Constantinople,§ Atticus was chosen to succeed Arsacius, who died in the year 405, and the Joannites were still persecuted in the Eastern church. Chrysostom himself was obliged to move from place to place on account of danger from robbers, and, as he wrote to Innocent, bishop of Rome, who sincerely, though unsuccessfully, laboured in his cause, he was in the third year of his banishment, exposed to famine, pestilence, war, continual sieges, an incredible desolation, to death every day, and to the Isaurian swords.

Arsacius dies, A.D. 405, and Atticus succeeds to the See.

His enemies, beholding with an evil eye, the respect every where paid to him, procured an order for him to be removed to Pityus, the very shore of the Black Sea. In his way thither, he was brought to an Oratory of Basiliscus, who had suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian's persecution. Here he desired to rest, but his guards, who had all along treated him with brutish ferocity, refused him the

* [Soz. viii. c. 27.]

† [Epist. 16. ad Olymp. tom. 7. p. 99. ed. Savile.]

‡ This great imbecility was one reason why he had always dined alone, when bishop of Constantinople. It is well known, that to persons of his weak habit, the attendance at feasts and entertainments is one of the severest punishments. Chrysostom had still more weighty reasons for his recluseness; the sumptuousness of Constantinople was in a manner proverbial, and he thought it his duty to check it. If any thing can add to the wickedness of those accusations which drove him from his See, it is, that he was charged with pride for dining in solitude. Yet he had been very hospitable to the poor, and was an uncommon pattern of beneficence and liberality.

§ [Socrat. vi. c. 20. Soz. viii. c. 27.]

indulgence. Nature was however exhausted; he had not gone four miles, before he was so extremely ill, that they were obliged to return with him. Here he received the Lord's Supper, made his last prayer before them all, and having concluded with his usual doxology, "Glory be to God for all events," he breathed out his soul, in the fifty-third year of his age, in the year 407. The Joannites continued their separate assemblies till the year 438, when Proclus, then entering on the See, put an end to the schism, by making a panegyric on Chrysostom's memory, and procuring an order from the emperor Theodosius II. the son of Arcadius, that his body should be brought back to Constantinople with great funeral solemnity. He, who in his lifetime, had met with so many enemies, was now universally esteemed and admired, and Theodosius himself sincerely bewailed the injury done to so excellent a personage by his parents.

Chrysostom dies, A. D. 407.

I have formerly observed, that the corruption of Christianity was deeper and stronger in great cities than in the country. The bishopric of Damasus at Rome was an unhappy proof of this in the West; and in the East, the bishopric of Chrysostom, in the beginning of this century, affords a lamentable proof of the same thing. Never was there a more striking confirmation of the truth of the Christian doctrine, the original and native depravity of man. How often have we been told, that whatever is said, in the writings of the New Testament, of the carnal mind, and its enmity against God,—of the woe denounced against those of whom all men speak well,—of the persecution which must be sustained by those who love the Lord Jesus, belongs only to the apostolical age, or at least to the times preceding the era of Constantine, when heathenism prevailed in the Roman empire! Behold, the empire is become Christian; idolatry and all the rites of heathenism are subjected to legal penalties; the profession of the Gospel is become exceedingly honourable; and the externals of religion are supported by the munificence of emperors, and by the fashion of the age, even with excessive sumptuousness. Behold a bishop of the first See, learned, eloquent beyond measure, of talents the most popular, of a genius the most exuberant, and of a solid understanding

by nature; magnanimous and generous, liberal I had almost said to excess, sympathizing with distress of every kind, and severe only to himself; a man of that open, frank, ingenuous temper, which is so proper to conciliate friendship; a determined enemy of vice, and of acknowledged piety in all his intentions! Yet we have seen him exposed to the keenest shafts of calumny, expelled with unrelenting rage by the united efforts of the court, the nobility, the clergy of his own diocese, and the bishops of other dioceses. What is to be said? His successor Atticus lived long in peace; and, by a cautious conduct preserved the good-will of men in general; though he had joined in the persecution of Chrysostom. Sisinnius too, the Novatian, had in a degree joined in the same opposition. Both these men, however, by elegant and affable manners, conciliated the good will of man, and seemed to have passed through life without any persecution. Whether men are of the general church, or of the dissenters, it matters not: the favour or the enmity of mankind depends not on such external distinctions. What either of these two did in opposing sin, I know not; nor is there enough recorded of them to fix their characters with certainty. With Chrysostom, who was evidently their superior in holiness and virtue, we have seen how hard it fared. He was choleric, and too vehement, no doubt; but he knew the importance of divine things, and was, therefore, much in earnest, and the best charity was, doubtless, at the bottom of all his zeal. If the world naturally loved what was good, could it not have thrown a candid veil over one fault, the frequent attendant of the most upright minds? Should it lavish its favours on men of ambiguous virtue and pusillanimous prudence? Certainly it seeth not as God seeth; it loves flattery and approves the decent appearance of virtue; not plain truth, not genuine virtue. Such seems the just conclusion from the case: real godliness, under Christian as well as heathen governments, is hated, dreaded, and persecuted. And the important doctrine of our native depravity is confirmed by such events, and proves itself to the senses of mankind.

I miss my aim in this history, if I show not the constant connexion between the doctrines of the Gospel and holy practice. This connexion is sufficiently plain in the history

of Chrysostom: though, had he known divine truth more exactly, and entered more experimentally into the spirit of the Gospel, he would have been more humble, and would have known better how to govern his own temper.

This great man, however, THOUGH DEAD, YET SPEAKS by his works. He laboured much in expounding the Scriptures, and though not copious in the exhibition of evangelical truth, still he every where shows that he loved it.* On those words of the Apostle, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, he says, "What a saying! —what mind can comprehend it? He made a just person a sinner, that he might make sinners just. But the Apostle's language is still stronger: He doth not say, he made him a sinner, but sin; that we might be made, not righteous, but righteousness, even the righteousness of God. For it is of God, since not of works (which would require spotless perfection) but by grace we are justified, where all sin is blotted out." Here is a plain testimony to the Christian doctrine of justification, and under this shelter, this holy man, no doubt, found rest for his own soul.

Those who think every thing too much which is bestowed on a minister of Christ, may read a just defence of the maintenance of pastors, and a proper rebuke of their own uncharitableness, in his comment on Philippians, chapter the eleventh. On the fourth chapter of Thessalonians, in opening the Apostle's direction against fornication, he forcibly rebukes the prudential avarice of many parents, who protract the marriage of their sons, till they are far advanced in life. In the meantime they are led into various temptations; and if they do marry afterwards, are too much corrupted by vicious habits, to behave with that decorum in the marriage-state, which they might have done in more early life. He recommends, therefore, early marriages; and the advice deserves the more attention, as coming from a man, who often expresses his admiration of the monastic life, which, however, he does without throwing any reproach on matrimony.

In occasionally speaking of that passage of St. Paul to the Romans, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that

* Hom. on 2d Epis. to Cor. chap. v. verse 21.

runneth," * he introduces the doctrine of free-will in the same manner as most of the fathers did, who spake of it at all, from the days of Justin, and observes, that the whole is said to be of God, because the greatest part is. So hard pressed is he with the plain words of the Apostle, which are directly opposite to the system he had imbibed. But Platonic philosophy had done this mischief to the Church, to the great hurt of Christian faith and humility.†

The chief use of his Treatise on the Priesthood, is to excite in young minds a serious awe with respect to the danger of miscarrying in an office so important and so sacred, and to check the levity and presumption with which so many undertake it! He lays down, however, some good views of the difficulty of steering clear of extremes, in suiting instructions to particular cases, in checking impertinent curiosity, and in directing the people to useful objects.

The practical views of this writer, so far as they relate to the regulation of the conduct, are the most striking. Having lived in two great imperial cities, where plays and shows were very frequent, he earnestly inveighed against those disorders.‡ He calls the stage an academy of incontinence. "What harm, say you, is there in going to a play? Is that sufficient to keep one from the Communion?§ I ask you, can there be a more shameless sin, than to come to the holy table defiled with adultery? Hear the words of him who is to be our Judge. Jesus Christ saith, whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. What can be said of those, who passionately spend whole days in those places, in looking on women of ill fame: with what face will they pretend to say, they did not behold them to lust after them? They see women adorned on purpose to inspire lust. If, in the church itself, where Psalms are sung, the Scripture is read, and the fear of the Almighty appears, lust will

* In his exposition on Hebrews, 7th chapter. [Hom. 12.]

† It may be worth while just to mention, that he pathetically rebukes the sloth and negligence of parents and masters, who would throw all the work of instruction on ministers, and do nothing themselves for the spiritual benefit of their household. A plain thought, but how true at this day!

‡ [Orat. 5. in Annam. 1. 7. 17. 37, and 38 in Matt. 32, and 38. in Joann. Orat. 3. in David et Saul.]

§ [Orat. 10. tom. 5. p. 39.]

creep in like a thief, how shall the frequenters of the stage* overcome the motions of concupiscence?

CHAP. II.

AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS ABRIDGED.

FROM the latter end of the third century to the former part of the fifth, we have seen a gradual declension of godliness; and when we view, in the West, the increase of monastic darkness and superstition; in the East, the same evils to a still greater degree, attended with such an augmentation of iniquity, that even where all the formalities of godliness are preserved, the power of it is hated and persecuted, in the same manner as by Pagans; in fine, when the vestiges of Christian truth are scarcely discernible, we shall not be far amiss in pronouncing, that, in such a state of religion, the wholesome effects of the first effusion of the Spirit of God are brought to a close.

It is evident, that real Christianity, notwithstanding its nominal increase under Christian emperors, must soon have been extinct, if God had not interposed with a second great effusion of his Spirit. He did so in the course of the fifth century, and the Church rose again from its ruins in one part at least of the Empire.†

It behoves us to attend to this gracious display of divine goodness; and for this purpose, we must look back into the last century, to trace the secret springs of this dispensation. They particularly involve the private life of Augustine, bishop of Hippo. He was the great instrument of reviving the knowledge of evangelical truth. By a very remarkable work of divine grace on his own soul, he was qualified to contend with the growing corruptions. It is a happy circumstance, that we have, in his Confessions, a large and

* Balls and public meetings of entertainment are as much the objects of his indignation as plays. Games of chance also he represents as the occasions of blasphemies, losses, anger, quarrels, and all manner of crimes. Du Pin. Chrysostom.

† The truth is, men who really fear God, in all ages have been united against these things; and for this reason, which is felt by them, though not by others, namely, that they have too serious a conflict with indwelling sin, to give themselves up to external incitements of evil.

† The Western, as will appear in the course of the narrative.

distinct account of his own conversion. And who could relate it like himself? I proceed to give an account of these Confessions: the propriety and importance of so long a detail will afterwards appear.*

AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS ABRIDGED.†

BOOK I.

THOU art great, O Lord, and most worthy to be praised; great is thy power, and of thy wisdom there is no end.

[C. 1.] A man, a portion of thy creation, wishes to praise thee, a man carrying about him his mortality, carrying about him the evidences of his sin, and a testimony that thou resistest the proud; even such a man wishes to praise thee. Thou excitest him, that he should delight to praise thee. For thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless till it find rest in thee.

Who shall give me to rest in thee? that thou mayest

[C. 5.] come into my heart, and inebriate it, that I may forget my own evils, and embrace thee, my only good? What art thou to me? Pity me, that I may speak. What am I to thee, that thou shouldest command me to love thee, and be displeased with me, if I do not, and threaten me with the greatest miseries? Is that itself a small misery, to be destitute of the love of thee? Alas! alas! tell me, by thy compassions, O Lord, my God, what thou art to me? SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION. So speak, that I may hear. Behold! the ears of my heart are before thee, O Lord; open them, and SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION. May I run after this voice, and apprehend thee. HIDE NOT THY FACE

* The life of this great man was written by Possidius, sometimes called Possidonius, a pious presbyter of his diocese, afterwards bishop of Calama. Though poorly written, it yet deserves to be mentioned, as it confirms the authenticity of the historical parts of the Confessions. Augustine was born in the city of Tagasta in Numidia, of creditable parents. His father, Patricius, continued a Pagan till near his death; his mother, Monica, was renowned for Christian piety. At the time of his full conversion to the Gospel he was upwards of thirty years of age.

† [The sense is given with sufficient accuracy in all these translations from Augustine, and sometimes the original is very closely as well as elegantly rendered, though at others greater latitude is taken, and much is compressed in few words.]

FROM ME. May I die,* that I may see it, lest I die indeed. My soul is a habitation too narrow for thy entrance; do thou enlarge it. It is in ruins; do thou repair it. It has what must offend thine eyes, I know and must confess: But who shall cleanse it? or to whom shall I cry but to thee? CLEANSE ME FROM MY SECRET FAULTS, AND KEEP ME FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS. I BELIEVE, AND THEREFORE SPEAK. O Lord, thou knowest: Have not I confessed to thee my sins, and hast not thou pardoned the iniquity of my heart? I will not contend in judgment with thee, who art truth itself: for I would not deceive myself. I will not contend in judgment with thee, for if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who can stand? †

But, suffer me to speak, who am dust and ashes. Suffer me to speak, because I address thy mercy, and not the scornfulness of proud men. Perhaps thou deridest (the simplicity of my thoughts,)‡ yet wilt [c. 6.] thou turn and exercise compassion upon me. What else would I say, O Lord, my God, than that I know not whence I came hither into this, shall I call it mortal life, or living death? Thy compassionate consolations supported me, and thou gavest me the nourishment of infancy.

Hear me, O God, Woe to the sins of man! Thou pitiest him, because thou madest him, and madest not sin in him. Who shall inform me of the sin of [c. 7.] my infancy? For none is clear from sin in thy sight, not even the infant, whose life is only one day. Could it be right in me to solicit with tears, what it would be noxious to receive; to express vehement indignation against my parents and betters, if they did not comply with my will; and to endeavour, though with feeble blows, to avenge myself upon them? The imbecility of my infant limbs was innocent, not so the spirit of the infant. I have seen and observed an infant full of envy; pale with anger, he looked at his fellow-suckling with bitterness in his countenance. Since I was conceived in iniquity, and my mother nourished

* He seems to wish to undergo any mortification, even loss of life itself, rather than lose the enjoyment of his God.

† It is obvious to observe, how a mind like Augustine's, altogether resting on grace and free justification, is freed from the solicitude of self-vindication in any part of his conduct; whereas, those who rest for salvation, in any degree, on themselves, are ever tempted to extenuate their sins.

‡ [Literally, me.]

me in her womb in sin, where, Lord, where, or when was I innocent? But I pass by this whole time, no traces of which I recollect.*

[c. 9.] What miseries, Lord, did I experience, when I was directed, in the plan of my education, to obey my teachers, in order that I might acquire that knowledge, which might be subservient to the attainment

[c. 10.] of false riches and honour? Yet, I sinned; O thou, who ordainest all things, except our sins; I sinned in rebelling against the orders of parents and masters. That literature which they wished me to acquire, with whatever intention, was yet capable of being applied to a good use. My disobedience arose not from the love of better things, but from the love of play, and from a fondness for games and shows. Behold these things with an eye of mercy, and deliver us who now call on thee; deliver also those who do not call on thee as yet, that they may call on thee, and experience thy deliverance!

[c. 11.] I had heard from childhood of the eternal life promised unto us through the humility of the Lord our God condescending to our pride. Thou sawest, when I was yet a boy, and seemed to be on the brink of death, through a sudden and violent pain of the stomach, with what eagerness I begged Christian baptism from the charity of my mother and of the church. My mother, who travailed in birth for my eternal salvation, was hastening to comply with my desires, that I might wash away my sins, confessing thee, O Lord Jesus; when I suddenly recovered my health. A relapse into presumptuous sin, after baptism, being judged more dangerous, and the prospect of life admitting too great a probability of such relapse, my baptism was still deferred. Thus did I at that time believe in Christ, my father being the only infidel in our family. My mother was zealous that THOU shouldst be my Father. rather than he: and in this she was favoured with thy help: obedient as she was to her husband, according to thy command, in this point she prevailed over him. Was the delay of my baptism for my benefit? What is the cause, that we

* The serious reader will not be inclined to pass over, in levity, these striking proofs of the sinful propensity of nature exerting itself antecedent to the growth of reason or the power of habit.

hear every where such sounds as these, LET HIM DO WHAT HE WILL, HE IS NOT YET BAPTIZED. How much better for me, had I been, in more early life, initiated into the fold of Christ! *

Yet, in childhood itself, though little dreaded by my mother, in comparison of the dangers of youth, I was indolent; and I improved in learning only through necessity. A false worldly ambition was the only motive laid before me by my teachers; but thou, who numberest the hairs of our heads, improvedst their error to my advantage, whilst thou justly punishedst the great sins of so young an offender by their corrections. The learning, which with no holy intention they taught me, was sanctified by thee, and my guilty laziness was scourged. So hast thou ordained, that a mind disordered by sin should be its own punishment.

But why I hated Greek literature, in which I was instructed when very young, I do not even yet sufficiently understand. For I was fond of Latin [c. 13.] learning, not indeed the first rudiments, but those things which classical masters teach. To read and write, and learn arithmetic, would have been as severe drudgery to my spirit, as all the Greek literature. I lay this also to the account of my native depravity, which prefers the worse, and rejects the better. The uses of reading, writing, and arithmetic, are obvious; not so the study of the wanderings of Æneas, which I attended to while I forgat my own. Of what use was it to deplore the self-murdering Dido, while yet I could bear unmoved the death of my own soul, alienated from thee during the course of these pursuits,—from thee, my God, my life. O thou light of my heart, and bread of my inward man, and true husband of my soul! I loved thee not. I committed fornication against thee, and (such the spirit of the world) I was applauded with "well done" on all sides, and I should have been ashamed

* The narrative before us may justly be called a history of the usual operations of the Spirit of God on his people. Convictions in early life, on remarkable occasions, are common among these, and usually wear away, as in the case of Augustine. The examples of Constantine and Constantius deferring their baptism, seems to have made the practice fashionable, not from any idea of the unlawfulness of infant baptism, but from the selfish and pernicious notions which he has stated. No wonder, that he who justly thought that his own soul had suffered much by the delay, was afterwards a strenuous asserter of the expediency of more early baptism.

to have been found otherwise disposed. Yet the friendship of the world is fornication against thee. This is the kind of literature, which has arrogated to itself the name of polite and liberal. Learning, of real utility, is looked on as low and vulgar. Thus, in my childhood did I sin by a vicious preference. Two and two make four, was to me an odious sing-song; but the wooden horse, the burning of Troy, and the ghost of Creusa, were most enchanting spectacles of vanity. Yet why did I hate Greek literature,
[c. 14.] when employed in the same sort of objects? Homer is most agreeably trifling; to me, however, when a boy, he was by no means agreeable. I suppose Virgil would be the same to Grecian youths, on account of the difficulties of learning a foreign language. Discipline is needful to overcome our puerile sloth, and this also is part of thy government of thy creatures, O God, for the purpose of restraining our sinful impetuosity. From the ferulas of masters to the trials of martyrs, thy wholesome severities may be traced, which tend to recall us to thee from that pernicious voluptuousness, by which we departed from thee.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, let not my soul faint under thy discipline, nor let me faint in confessing to thee
[c. 15.] thy mercies, by which thou hast delivered me from all my own evil ways; that thou mayest endear thyself to me, above all the blandishments which I was following, and that I may love thee most ardently, and embrace thy hand with all my heart, that thou mayest free me from all temptation, even to the end. O [Lord] my King and my God, may whatever useful thing I learnt when a boy, serve thee; may what I speak, [and write,] and read, and number, serve thee; because while I was learning vain things thou gavest me thy discipline, and in those vain things forgavest the sins of my delights. For in them I learnt many useful words, though they might have been learned, abstracted from this connexion with vanity.

Alas! the torrent of human custom! who shall resist thee? How long will it be, ere thou be dried
[c. 16.] up? How long wilt thou roll the sons of Eve into a great and tempestuous sea, which even they, who have fled for refuge to the cross, can scarcely escape? Have not I read of Jove, at once the thunderer and the

adulterer? What is this, but to teach men to call their crimes no crimes, while they have the sanction of gods whom they imitate? Terence introduces a profligate young man justifying his lewdness by the example of Jove, while he beholds on the wall a picture of Jupiter and Danäe,* and excites himself to lust as by divine tuition, SHALL HE, WHO SHAKES HEAVEN WITH HIS THUNDER, DO THESE THINGS; AND MAY NOT I, A POOR MORTAL, DO THE SAME? Yet I, my God, now indulged by thy grace to behold thee in peace, learnt these things with pleasure, was delighted with them, and was called a boy of promising genius. The motives of praise and disgrace then spurred on my restless heart to literary exertions. What [c. 17.] acclamations were made to a puerile exercise of mine on a particular occasion! Were not all these things smoke and wind? Was there not another way of exercising my talents, in celebrating thy praise? But, what wonder, that I departed far from thee, my God, when men were proposed to me as objects of imitation, who [c. 18.] would blush to be detected in a barbarism or solecism, in reciting their own actions, though innocent; and at the same time might recite the story of their own lewdness, not only with impunity, but even with commendation, provided they did so with a copious and elegant flow of diction. O thou God of long-suffering, who permittest men thus to affront thee! Wilt thou not deliver from this horrible pit the soul that seeks thee, that thirsts after thy delights, and says, THY FACE, LORD, WILL I SEEK? It was by the darkness of libidinous affection that the prodigal son † went to a great distance from thee, his Father, gracious in bestowing on him thy gifts; and still more gracious to him when returning in indigence. How studiously exact are men in observing the rules of letters and syllables, while they neglect the rules of eternal salvation! Thou dwellest on high, in inaccessible light, and scatterest penal blindness on unbridled lusts. A man shall seek the fame of eloquence, while, before the crowded audience, he guards against the least false pronunciation, and guards not at all against the fiercest malevolence of his own heart, raging against his fellow-creatures.

* Terence in Eunuch. [act. 3. scene 5.] † Luke xv.

In this school did I wretchedly live. To please men was then to me the height of virtue, whilst I saw not [c. 19.] the whirlpool of baseness in which I was cast from thine eyes. For what more filthy than I, all this time, deceiving by innumerable falsehoods both masters and parents, through the love of play and amusements? I even robbed the storehouses of my parents, either from the spirit of gluttony, or to bestow things agreeable to my playfellows. In my plays, I often sought to obtain fraudulent victories, overcome by the desire of vain excellence. Yet, what should I dread so much to suffer, or be so ready to accuse, in another, if detected, as that very thing which I did to others; in which, however, if I myself was detected, I was more disposed to rage than to submit. Is this puerile innocence? far from it, O Lord. Change the scene only from pedagogues and masters, from nuts and balls, and sparrows, to prefects, kings, gold, and estates, and we see the vices of men, just as heavier punishments succeed to ferulas.

Still, O Lord, in my childhood I have much to praise thee for. Many, many, were thy gifts; the sin was mine that I sought pleasure, truth, and happiness, not [c. 20.] in thee, but in the creature, and thence rushed into pains, confusions, and errors. I thank thee, O my delight and confidence, for thy gifts; but do thou preserve them for me, and the things which thou hast given me shall be increased and perfected, and I shall be with thee, because thou hast given me to be so.*

* It is a very unjust surmise of Mr. Gibbon, to infer from Augustine's unwillingness to learn Greek, that he never attained the knowledge of that language; when he tells us, that he was doubtless a person of uncommon quickness of parts. His sloth and other vicious practices in childhood were, I suppose, such as are common to children. But few are disposed to look on them as serious evils. To Augustine's mind they appeared what they were, the marks of an apostate nature. Though, since the destruction of Pagan idolatry, there is by no means the same danger of reading classic authors, yet how justly blameable is the practice of leading boys so much to lewd poets, instead of acquainting them with the more solid excellences of many prose authors? A just selection of the most innocent and useful authors, and a perpetual comparison of their sentiments with those of Christianity, will not only guard against the poison of the classics, but instruct youth in the necessity and importance of Revelation. Schoolmasters, as well as children, may learn, in what we have seen, just matter of rebuke for exalting literary above moral excellence.

BOOK II.

I AM willing to recollect the scenes of baseness and carnal corruption which I passed through in my youth, not that I may love them, but that I may love thee, my God. I do it from the love of thy love, recollecting my own very evil ways in the bitterness of memory, that thou mayest be endeared to me, O Delight that never deceives; Delight happy and secure; thou which collectest and bindest together the dispersed parts of my broken soul. While averse from thee, the only God, I vanished into a variety of vanities! * For in my youth I even burned to be satiated with forbidden pleasures, and became as rottenness in thy sight, while I pleased myself, and desired to please the eyes of men. [c. 1.]

What was it that I delighted in, but to love and be beloved? But, by the excess of passion, the serenity of affection was not distinguished from the darkness of lust. My tender years were hurried along through the whirlpool of flagitiousness. Thy displeasure was all the time embittering my soul, and I knew it not. The noise of my carnal chains, and the punishment of my pride, rendered me deaf to thy voice; I went [further] from thee, [and] thou sufferedst it: I was tossed and agitated; and I overflowed with the ebullitions of lewdness, and thou wast silent, O my too tardy joy! At that time thou wast silent, and I wandered deeply from thee among many barren seeds of woes, in a state of proud degradation, and restless weariness. Thy omnipotence is not far from us, even when we are very far from thee; I might have heard thy voice, recommending a single life devoted to God, allowing indeed matrimony, and frowning on lewdness.† But I burst all legal bonds, yet escaped not thy scourges;—who of mortals can? For thou wast always present, severely merciful, mixing all my unlawful delights with bitter alloys, that I might seek for pleasure without alloy or obstacle, and not be able to find the possibility of this, but in thee; thee, I say, O Lord, who connectest pain with the breach [c. 2.]

* The beautiful thought, thus diffusively expressed in our author's usual manner, is happily painted in a single word by the Psalmist, UNITE my heart to fear thy name. Psalm lxxxvi. 11.

† 1 Cor. vii.

of thy laws, who smitest that thou mayest heal, and slayest us that we may not die from thee. Where was I, and how long did I live in exile from thy house, in that sixteenth year of my age, when the madness of lust seized me altogether, and I willingly suffered the reins to fall from my hands? To the disgrace of our nature, this species of lust is every where tolerated, though forbidden by thy laws.* My friends took no pains to bridle me by the wholesome restraint of marriage; their anxiety was that I should acquire the arts and graces of eloquence.

[c. 3.] That year I had vacation from my studies, being returned from Madaura, a neighbouring city, where I had begun to learn oratory, to my father's house at Tagasta. He, with a spirit above his circumstances, for he was but a poor freeman of the town just mentioned, determined to send me to Carthage, that I might have the greatest advantages for proficiency. Why do I relate these things before thee, my God, to my fellow-creatures, the few of them, who may read these lines? That both I and they may consider out of how great a depth it behoves us to cry to thee. And what is nearer than thine ears, if the heart confide in thee, and the life flow from faith? Who did not then extol the noble spirit of my father, laying out so much money on the education of his son; a spirit, so much superior to that of many much richer citizens, who had not the heart to send their sons to Carthage? While yet he had no concern in what manner I grew up to thee. Whether I was chaste or not, cost him no thought, provided I was eloquent.—In this year of vacation my passions were rampant without controul. This pleased my father, who expressed his pleasure on the occasion to my mother. She had lately begun to feel thy holy love, and [to become thy holy habitation.] He was a catechumen in profession. Instantly, she conceived a pious trepidation on my account. My God, thou spakest to me by her, and warnedst me strongly against the ways of vice.

* Would to God that this were not the case in Christian countries, as well as Pagan! If the reader feel himself inclined to treat with levity the serious manner in which juvenile vices are treated by the author, he will, when better informed of the malignity of sin, condemn his own taste, not that of Augustine. The same contrast may be extended to the case of his theft, which follows.

Thy voice in her I despised, and thought it to be only the voice of a woman, which made not the least impression on my mind. So blinded was I, that I should have blushed to be thought less wicked than my companions, and even invented false stories of my sinful exploits, to obtain their commendation. My pious parent was prevented from encouraging me to marry, because she thought the usual studies, which I was now to enter upon, might be serviceable to promote in me the work of true religion. My father thought little of Thee, but much of his son in vain expectations. Thus, while they both were too anxious for my literary improvements, I made progress in vice, and shut myself up in the darkness of sin, so as to bar up, against myself, the admission of thy truth as much as possible.

Thy law certainly punishes theft, O Lord, and so does the LAW * WRITTEN in the hearts of men. For, what thief can bear another? Yet, compelled by [c. 4.] no want, I deliberately committed theft; through the wantonness of iniquity and the contempt of justice. It was not the effect of the theft, but the sin itself, which I wished to enjoy. There was a pear-tree in the neighbourhood of my father's vineyard, loaded with fruit, though not of the most tempting kind. At dead of night, in company with some profligate youths, I plundered the tree: the spoil was principally thrown to the hogs; for I had abundance of better fruit at home. Behold my heart! my God, behold my heart, which thou hast pitied in its deep abyss of sin! What did I mean, that I should be gratuitously wicked? I loved destruction itself. In the common course of wickedness men have some end in view. Even [c. 5.] Catiline himself loved not his crimes, but something else, for the sake of which he perpetrated them. We are deceived by appearances of good; embracing the shadows, while we follow our own lusts, instead of seek- [c. 6.] ing the substance, which is only in thee. Thus, the soul commits fornication, when it is turned from thee, and seeks, out of thee, that pleasure, honour, power, wealth, or wisdom, which it never will find in its genuine purity, till it return to thee. All, who remove themselves far from thee, and set up themselves in opposition, perversely imitate some attribute of God; though even by

* He means the voice of natural conscience. See Romans, ch. ii. ver. 15.

such imitation they own thee to be the Creator of the universe. This is the general nature of sin. It deceives by some fictitious shadow of that good, which in God alone is to be found. But what vicious or perverse imitation of my Lord was there in my theft? I can conceive none, unless it be the pleasure of acting arbitrarily and with impunity against law; a dark similitude of Omnipotence. O rottenness! O monster of life, and profundity of death! Could I delight in what was not lawful, merely because it was not lawful? What reward shall I give to [c. 7.] the Lord, that I can now recollect these things without fear of damnation? I will love and bless thee, Lord, because thou hast pardoned such horrible evils. I impute it to thy grace [and mercy] that thou hast melted my sins as ice is melted. I impute also to thy grace my exemption from those evils which I have not committed. For of what was I not capable, who loved even gratuitous wickedness? I am sensible that all is forgiven; not only the evils which I have actually committed, but also those evils which by thy guidance I have been kept from committing.—He who, called by thee, hath avoided the evils which he hears me confessing, should not deride me a poor patient healed by the Physician, since he himself is indebted to the same Benefactor for his health, or, to speak more properly, for his being afflicted with a less degree of sickness.

O the unsearchable seduction of pernicious friendship, the avidity of doing mischief from sport, the plea- [c. 9.] sure of making others suffer; and this without any distinct workings, either of avarice or of revenge! We hear others say, Let us go, let us do it, and we are ashamed to appear defective in impudence. Who can unfold to me the intricacies of this knot of wickedness? It is [c. 10.] filthy, I will pry no more into it. I will not see it. Thee will I choose, O righteousness and innocence, light truly honourable, and satiety insatiable! With thee is perfect rest, and life without perturbation. He who enters into thee, enters into the joy of his Lord, and shall not fear, and shall be in the best situation in thee, the Best of Beings. I departed from thee; I erred and strayed, O my God, from thy firm and upright ways; and in my youth I became to myself a region of desolation.

BOOK III.

I CAME to Carthage surrounded and agitated with flagitious lusts. After thee, O my God, the true bread of life, I hungered not; and though [c. 1.] famished with real indigence, and longing after that which satisfieth not, I had no desire for incorruptible food, not because I was full of it, for the more empty I was, the more fastidious I grew. My sordid passions, however, were gilded over with the decent and plausible appearances of love and friendship. Foul and base as I was, I affected the reputation of liberal and polite humanity. I rushed into the lusts with which I desired to be captivated. My God, my mercy, with how great bitterness didst thou, in thy extraordinary kindness, mix those vain allurements by which I was miserably enslaved and beaten! for beaten I truly was with all the iron rods of envy, suspicion, fear, indignation, and quarrelling. The spectacles of [c. 2.] the theatre, in particular, now hurried me away, full of the images of my miseries, and the fomentations of my fire.

The arts of the Forum also engaged my ambition; the more fraudulent, the more laudable. [c. 3.] Pride and arrogance now elated my soul, though I was far from approving the frantic proceedings of the men called EVERSORES, who made a practice of disturbing modest pleaders, and confounding their minds by riots.— [c. 4.] Amidst these things, in that imbecility of judgment which attends youth, I studied the books of eloquence with the most ardent desire of vain-glory, and in the course of my reading dipped into the Hortensius of Cicero, which contains an exhortation to the study of philosophy. This book was the instrument of effecting a remarkable change in my views. I suddenly gave up the fantastic hope of reputation by eloquence, and felt a most ardent thirst after wisdom. In the mean time, I was maintained at Carthage at my mother's expense, being in the nineteenth year of my age, my father having died two years before. How did I long, my God, to fly from earthly things to thee, and yet I knew not what thou wert doing with me. At that time, O light of my heart, though I was unacquainted with the

apostolical admonition, TAKE HEED LEST ANY MAN SPOIL YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND VAIN DECEIT; * thou knowest what was the sole object of my delight in the Ciceronian volume, namely, that I was vehemently excited by it to seek for wisdom, not in this or that sect, but wheresoever it was to be found. And the only thing which damped my zeal was, that the name of Christ, that precious name, which from my mother's milk I had learned to reverence, was not there. And, whatever was without this name, however just, and learned, and polite, could not wholly carry away my heart.—I determined therefore to

[c. 5.] apply my mind to the Holy Scriptures, to see what they were; and I now see the whole subject was impenetrable to the proud,† low in appearance, sublime in operation, and veiled with mysteries; and my frame of heart was such as to exclude me from it, nor could I stoop to take its yoke upon me. I had not these sensations when I attended to the Scriptures, but they appeared to me unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Cicero. My pride was disgusted with their manner, and my penetration could not enter into their meaning.‡ It is true, those who are content to be little children, find by degrees an illumination of their souls; but I disdained to be a child, and elated with pride imagined myself to be possessed of manly wisdom.

In this situation I fell in with the Manichees, men who had in their mouths the mere sound of Father,

[c. 6.] Son, and Holy Ghost, and were always talking of THE TRUTH, THE TRUTH, and yet formed the most absurd opinions of the works of nature, on which subjects the heathen philosophers far excelled them. O truth, how eagerly did I pant after thee, while they only used the word with their mouths, or repeated it in many huge volumes! But they taught me to look for my God in the Sun and Moon, and also in a number of splendid phantasms of their own creation.§ I endeavoured to feed on these vanities,

* Coloss. ii. 8.

† [Rem non compertam superbis neque nudatam pueris sed incessu humilem, successu excelsam et velatam mysteriis.]

‡ An excellent description of the usual effect of a little Scriptural study on a proud mind, which, by the just judgment of God, is given up to judicial infatuation and specious delusion, in some way or other.

§ The Manichees, so called from Manes their founder, had existed about an hundred years. It would not be worth while to notice them at all, were

but they being not my God, though I then supposed so, I was not nourished, but exhausted. How far did I wander then from thee! excluded even FROM THE HUSKS WHICH THE SWINE DID EAT! For the fables of the poets, which I did not believe, though I was entertained with them, were preferable to the absurdities of these lovers of truth. Alas! alas! by what steps was I led into Satanic depths! Panting after truth, I sought thee, my God, not in intellectual, but in carnal speculation; for I would confess all to thee, who didst compassionate my misery, even while I was hardened against thee.—The Manichees seduced me, partly with their subtle and captious questions concerning the origin of evil, partly with their blasphemies against the Old Testament saints.* I did not then understand, that though the divine rule of right and wrong is immutable in the abstract, and the love of God and our neighbour is always indispensably necessary, yet that there were particular acts of duty adapted to the times and seasons and circumstances in which they were placed, which abstracted from such consideration would be unlawful. In much ignorance I at that time derided thy holy servants, and was justly exposed to believe most ridiculous absurdities. And thou sentest thy hand from above, and freedst me from this depth of evil, while my mother was praying for me, more solicitous on account of the death of my soul, than other parents for the death of the body. She was favoured with a dream, by which thou comfortedst her soul with hope of my recovery. She appeared to herself to be standing on a plank, and a person came to her and asked her the cause

[c. 7.] [c. 8 & 9.] [c. 10.] [c. 11.]

it not for their connexion with the life of Augustine. Like most of the ancient heretics, they abounded in senseless whims, not worthy of any solicitous explanation. This they had in common with the Pagan Philosophers, that they supposed the supreme Being to be material, and to penetrate all nature. Their grand peculiarity was to admit of two independent principles, a good and an evil one, in order to solve the arduous question concerning the origin of evil. Like all heretics, they made a great parade of seeking truth with liberal impartiality, and were thus qualified to deceive unwary spirits, who, far from suspecting their own imbecility of judgment, and regardless of the word of God, and hearty prayer, have no idea of attaining religious knowledge by any other method than by natural reason.

* The Manichees objected to the characters of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, &c. on account of various actions allowed under the dispensation of their times, but forbidden under the New Testament, and thence formed an argument against the Divinity of the Old Testament.

of her affliction; and on being answered, that it was on my account, he charged her to be of good cheer, for that where she was, there also I should be. On which she immediately beheld me standing by her on the same plank. Whence was this but from thee, gracious Omnipotent, who takest care of each and all of us, as of single persons? When she related this to me, I endeavoured to evade the force of it, by observing, that it might mean to exhort her to be what I was. Without hesitation she replied, It was not said, where he is, there thou shalt be; but, where thou art, there he shall be. Her prompt answer made a stronger impression on my mind than the dream itself. For nine years, while I was rolling in the filth of sin, often attempting to rise, and still sinking deeper, did she in vigorous hope persist in incessant prayer. I remember, also, that she en-

[c. 12.] treated a certain bishop to undertake to reason me out of my errors. He was a person not backward to attempt this, where he found a docile subject. "But your son," says he, "is too much elated at present, and carried away with the pleasing novelty of his error, to regard any arguments, as appears by the pleasure he takes in puzzling many ignorant persons with his captious questions. Let him alone; only continue praying to the Lord for him; he will in the course of his study discover his error. I myself, perverted by my mother, was once a Manichee, and read almost all their books, and yet at length was convinced of my error, without the help of any disputant." All this satisfied not my anxious parent; with floods of tears she persisted in her request; when at last he, a little out of temper on account of her importunity, said, "Be gone, good woman; it is not possible, that the child of such tears should perish." She has often told me since, that this answer impressed her mind like a voice from Heaven.

BOOK IV.

For the space of nine years, namely, from the nineteenth

[c. 1.] to the twenty-eighth year of my age, I lived deceived and deceiving others, seducing men into various lusts, openly by what are called the liberal arts, and secretly by a false religion: in the former proud, in the

latter superstitious ; in all things seeking vain glory, even to theatrical applauses and contentious contests ; and to complete the dismal picture, a slave to the lusts of the flesh. So infatuated was I with the Manichean follies, that I drew my friends into them, and with them practised the impieties of the sect. The arrogant may despise me, and all who have never felt a salutary work of self-humiliation from thee, my God. But I would confess to thee my own disgraces, for thy glory. What am I, left to myself, but a guide rashly conducting others to a precipice? And when I am in a better state, what am I, but an infant feeding upon thee, the bread that perisheth not? What is any man since he is flesh? Let the proud and the strong despise us ; but we who are weak and poor would confess to thee.

[c. 2.] At this time I maintained myself by teaching rhetoric ; and without fraud I taught my scholars, not how to oppress the innocent, but sometimes how to vindicate the guilty. I lived also with one woman, but without matrimony. At this time I ceased not also to consult astrologers ; nor could I be induced by [c. 3.] the arguments of a very sensible physician, nor by the admonitions of my excellent friend Nebridius, to reject these follies.

[c. 4.] While I was teaching rhetoric in this manner in my native town, I enjoyed the friendship of a young man of my own age, a school-fellow and companion from infancy. Indeed there is no true friendship, except thou cement it among those who cleave to thee, through the love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. But it was a friendship too sweet, inflamed by the fervour of similar studies. For I had drawn him aside from the true faith, which he held not in a deep and genuine manner, into the Manichean follies, on account of which my mother bewailed me. And lo! thou who pursuest thy fugitives, O God of vengeance and source of mercies, and convertest us to thyself by wonderful methods, lo ! thou removedst him from this life, when I had scarcely enjoyed his friendship a year after my return to Tagasta. While he lay a long time senseless in a fever, and his life was despaired of, he was baptized without his own knowledge ; a thing which I regarded with great indifference,

as not doubting but he would retain my instructions which had been instilled into his mind, rather than that which had been applied to his body, when he was ignorant of the matter. However, against all expectation he recovered. As soon as I had an opportunity of conversing with him, I attempted to turn into ridicule his late baptism, in which I expected his concurrence. But he dreaded me as an enemy, and with wonderful freedom suddenly admonished me, that if I would be his friend, I should drop the subject. Confounded at this unexpected behaviour, I deferred the conversation, till he should be thoroughly recovered. But he was removed from my madness, that he might be saved with thee, my God, and that I might have comfort afterwards in reflecting on his salvation. In a few days the fever returned, and he died. How miserable was my life! My country was a punishment, my father's house a wonderful infelicity, and whatever I had enjoyed in common with him, without him was torment itself. I found I could now no longer say, He will come shortly, as I was wont to do. If I said, Hope in God, my soul refused; for the man whom I had lost was an object preferable to the phantasm,* on which I was bid to fix my hopes. Weeping alone was sweet to me, and supplied the absence of my friend.

Wretched I now was, and wretched is every soul that is bound by the friendship of mortal things. Be-
[c. 6.] hold my heart, my God, my hope, who cleansest me from the contagion of such affections, and directest my eyes to thee, and pluckest my feet out of the net. O mad-
[c. 7.] ness! not knowing how to love men as men.—O foolish man! bearing with no moderation the lot of humanity. The load of misery burdened me, which I knew thou alone couldst cure; but I was unwilling and impotent, because when I thought of thee, I had only a shadowy idol before me. If I attempted to throw my burden on thee, it returned upon myself, as I found nothing that would support it. I fled however from my country, and came to Carthage.

Time, other objects, and other friendships, gradually lessened my sorrow. But happy is he who loves thee, and

* He means the fantastic idea of God, which as a Manichee he had embraced.

his friend in thee, and his enemy for thy sake. For he only loses no friend to whom all are dear in him who is never lost; and who is he but our God, who made and fills heaven and earth. None loses thee but he who lets thee go; and he who dismisses thee, whither does he fly, but from the PROPITIOUS to the ADVERSE?—God of power! turn us, and show thy face, and we shall be saved. For, wherever the soul of man turns itself, it fixes upon sorrow, except in thee.—Be not vain, my soul, and make not the ear of thy heart deaf with the tumult of vanity. The word itself calls to thee to return; there is the place of rest not to be disturbed.—There with God fix thy mansion; there intrust whatever thou hast, my soul, when fatigued with vanities. If souls please thee, love them in God, and carry them with thee to him as many as thou canst, and say to them, let us love him, he made these things, and he is not far off. The good ye love is from him, but it will deservedly be bitter, if ye love it to excess, deserting him.—Ye seek a happy life—he who is our life descended hither and destroyed death.—After his descent, will ye not ascend and live? But why ascend, since ye are too high already? Come down, that ye may ascend to God. For by rising up against him ye have fallen. Tell your friends these things, that they may weep; and so take them with thee to God, if indeed thou sayest these things from his Spirit, and if indeed the fire of his love burn in thee.

[c. 8 & 9.] [c. 10.] [c. 11.] [c. 12.]

I made approaches to thee, O Lord, and thou repelledst me, because thou resistest the proud: and what was prouder, than to assert that I was naturally what thou art?* Alas! of what avail was it that I understood the logic of Aristotle, and what are called the liberal arts! I had, it is true, a facility of comprehension, and an acuteness in argumentation, thy gift; but I sacrificed not thence to thee. Hence they were to me a curse, and not a blessing. Yet, all this time, I looked on thee as an immense lucid body, of which I myself was a fragment. How much better was it with thy children of more tardy

[c. 15 & 16.]

* In this blasphemy the Manichees followed the Pagan philosophers. They had no idea, also, that God was a spirit. Hence our Author's long conflict, before he could form a spiritual idea of God.

genius, who did not recede from thy nest, but were fledged and grew up in safety in thy Church, and nourished the wings of love with the food of sound faith! O Lord our God, let us trust in the shadow of thy wings. "Do thou carry us to hoary hairs." * When thou art our strength, we have strength; our own is weakness.

BOOK V.

RECEIVE the sacrifice of my confessions, and heal all my bones, that they may say, Lord, who is like unto thee? The heart that is shut against thee excludes not thine eye, nor does the hardness of men's hearts repel thine hand, but thou softenest them when thou pleasest, in compassion or in vengeance, and none can hide himself from thy flame. But may my soul praise thee, that it may love thee, and may it acknowledge thy compassions, that it may praise thee! Let men be converted and seek thee; and behold, thou art in the heart of those who confess to thee, and cast themselves upon thee, and in thy bosom deplore their evil ways; and thou in mercy wilt wipe away their tears, that they may weep the more, and rejoice in tears, because thou, Lord, refreshest and comfortest them.

[c. 1.]

[c. 2.]

In the sight of my God I will give an account of the twenty-ninth year of my age. A Manichee bishop, named Faustus, had now come to Carthage, a great snare of the devil, and many were enchanted by his eloquence, which though I could not but commend, I yet distinguished from truth. Report had represented him as a very liberal and accomplished scholar. And as I had read many things of the philosophers, I compared them with the tedious fables of the Manichees, and found the former more probable. Thou regardest, Lord, the humble; the proud thou beholdest afar of. No doubt the foretelling of eclipses, and other things that might be mentioned, demonstrate the truth of the philosophical sciences in secular things. Unhappy is that man who knows all these things and knows not Thee; but blessed is he who knows thee, though he knows not these things. But he who knows both thee and them, is not happier on

[c. 3.]

[c. 4.]

* Isaiah xlvi. 4.

their account, but on account of thee alone is happy, if knowing thee he glorify thee as God, and is thankful, and is not vain in his imaginations. For, as he is in a better situation, who possesseth a tree, and is thankful to thee for the use of it, though he knows neither its height nor breadth, than he who measures it, and counts all its branches, and neither possesses it, nor knows nor has learned his Creator; so the believer, whose property all the riches of the world are, AND WHO HAVING NOTHING, YET POSSESSETH ALL THINGS, by cleaving to thee whom all things serve, is indisputably better than the most knowing natural philosopher upon earth, who lives in the neglect of thee.*

Yet the rashness of the Manichee writer, who undertook to write of Astronomy, though completely ignorant of the science, is inexcusable, especially as [c. 5.] he contended that the Holy Ghost resided personally in him. The ignorance of a believer, in such subjects is very excusable; even if he fancy his mistaken notions in natural philosophy to be branches of religion. But who can bear to hear a pretender to infallible inspiration vending absurdities on the works of nature? Here then I had [c. 6.] my doubts concerning the divinity of Manicheism, and in vain proposed them to those of the sect whom I met with. "You must wait till the all-accomplished Faustus come to Carthage," was all the answer I received. On his arrival I found him an agreeable speaker, and one who could deliver their dotages in a more persuasive tone. But by this time I was surfeited with these subjects, and I had been taught by thee, my God, who hast instructed me marvellously, but secretly, that style and manner, however excellent, were not the same thing as sound argument. The address, indeed, the pathos, the propriety of language, and facility of expression in clothing his sentiments, delighted me; but my mind was unsatisfied. The proofs of ignorance in science which I saw in Manicheism, connected with pretensions to infallibility, staggered my mind with respect to their whole system. On freely conversing with

* An excellent comparison between the state of an illiterate believer, who feeds on Christ by faith, and that of an accomplished man of science, even of one skilled in speculative theology among other branches of knowledge, but destitute of spiritual life.

him, I found him possessed of an ingenuous frankness, more valuable than all the subjects of my investigation. He owned his ignorance in all philosophy, and left me convinced of it. Grammar alone, and some Ciceronian and other classical furniture, made up his stock of knowledge, and supplied him with a copiousness of diction, which received additional ornament from his natural vivacity of imagination. My hope of discovering truth was now at [c. 7.] an end; I remained still a Manichee, because I despaired of succeeding better on any other plan. Thus that same Faustus, who had been the snare of death to many, was the first who relaxed my fetters, though contrary to his own intention. Thy hands, my God, in the secret of thy providence, forsook not my soul: day and night the prayers of my mother came up before thee, and thou wroughtest upon me in ways marvellous indeed, but secret. Thou didst it, my God: FOR MAN'S GOINGS ARE FROM THE LORD: and who affords salvation but thy hand, which restores what thou hast made? It was from thy influence [c. 8.] that I was persuaded to go to Rome to teach, instead of Carthage. The deep recesses of thy wisdom and mercy must be confessed by me in this dispensation. I understood, that at Rome a teacher was not exposed to those turbulent proceedings, which were so common at Carthage. Thus the madness of one set of men, and the friendship of others, promising me vain things, were thy means of introducing me into the way of life and peace, and in secret thou madest use of their perverseness and my own. Here I detested real misery, there sought false felicity. But the true cause of this removal was at that time hidden both from me and my mother, who bewailed me going away, and followed me to the sea-side; but I deceived her, though she held me close with a view either to call me back, or to go along with me. I pretended that I only meant to keep company with a friend till he set sail; and with difficulty persuaded her to remain that night in a place dedicated to the memory of Cyprian. But that night I departed privily; and she continued weeping and praying. Thus did I deceive my mother, and SUCH a mother! Yet was I preserved from the dangers of the sea, foul as I was in all the mire of sin, and a time was coming,

when thou wouldest wipe away my mother's tears, with which she watered the earth, and even forgive this my base undutifulness. And what did she beg of thee, my God, at that time, but that I might be hindered from sailing? THOU, in profound wisdom regarding the HINGE of her desire, neglectedst the particular object of her present prayers, that thou mightest gratify the general object of her devotions. The wind favoured us, and carried us out of sight of the shore, when in the morning she was distracted with grief, and filled thine ears with groans and complaints; whilst thou, in contempt of her violent agonies, hurriedst me along by my lusts to complete their desires, and punishedst her carnal desire with the just scourge of immoderate griefs.* She loved my presence with her, as is natural to mothers, though in her the affection was uncommonly strong, and she knew not what joy thou wast preparing for her from my absence. She knew not; therefore she wept and wailed. Yet after she had wearied herself in accusing my perfidy and cruelty, she returned to her former employment of praying for me, and went home, while I went to Rome.

And there I was punished with the scourge of bodily sickness, and I drew nigh to hell, carrying the load of all my sins, original and actual. For [c. 9.] Christ had not freed me from them by the body of his flesh through death. For how could a fantastic death, such as I, a Manichee, then believed his to be, deliver my soul? Whither must I have gone, had I at that time departed hence, but to the fire and torments worthy of my deeds, according to the truth of thy appointment! † She was ignorant of this, and yet prayed for me, being absent. But thou, every where present, heardest her, and pitiedst me. Still in the crisis of my danger, I desired not thy baptism as I had done when a boy: I had grown up to my own

* It requires a mind well seasoned with Christian discernment and humility, to admire in all this the Providence of God working good out of evil; to separate what is truly holy and humble in the affections of our author's mother, from what was really carnal and earthly; and hence to discover the justness of his reflections.

† Does the reader think this harsh? Let him consider whether it can be any thing else than the want of a firm belief of the word of God, and a contempt of his holiness and authority, that can make him think so, and he will do well to apply the awful case to his own conscience.

disgrace, and madly derided thy medicine of human misery. How my mother, whose affection both natural and spiritual toward me was inexpressible, would have borne such a stroke, I cannot conceive. Morning and evening she frequented the church, to hear thy word and to pray, and the salvation of her son was the constant burden of her supplications. Thou heardest her, O Lord, and performed in due season, what thou hadst predestinated. Thou [c. 10.] recoveredst me from the fever, that at length I might obtain also a recovery of still greater importance.

The Manichees are divided into two bodies, auditors, and elect. He, in whose house I lodged, was of the former sort. I myself was ranked among the latter. With them I fancied myself perfectly sinless, and laid the blame of the evils I committed on another nature, that sinned within me,* and my pride was highly gratified with the conception. My attachment to this sect, however, grew more lax, as I found the impossibility of discovering truth, and felt a secret predeliction in favour of the academic philosophy, which commends a state of doubt and uncertainty.† My landlord, who had not so much experience of the sect as I had, was elevated with their fancies. I checked his sanguine views; and though the intimacy I had contracted with this people (for a number of them live at Rome) made me backward to seek elsewhere for truth, I was, however, little solicitous to defend the reputation of their tenets. It was a deplorable evil with me, that my prejudice was so strong against the Christian faith. When I thought of thee, my God, I could not conceive any thing but what was corporeal, though of the most exquisite subtilty: but what was immaterial, appeared to me nothing. And here I seemed incurable in error. I did not conceive it possible, that a good Being should create an evil one, and therefore chose

* Every human soul was supposed by the Manichees to have in it a mixture of the good and the evil principle.

† A very natural and common effect of reasoning pride. When a man attempts to discover and adjust religious truth by leaning to his own understanding, he frequently finds scepticism the sole result of his most painful investigations; and every thing appears doubtful to him, except the incompetency of fallen man to understand these things, and the propriety of seeking a new nature and a spiritual understanding from above. If the errors of Manicheism appear very absurd, there are other modes of deviation from Scripture truth, which would appear no less so, were they as unfashionable in our times.

to admit limits to the infinite Author of Nature, by supposing him to be controlled by an independent evil principle. Yet, though my ideas were material, I could not bear to think of God being flesh. That was too gross and low in my apprehensions. Thy only-begotten Son appeared to me as the most lucid part of thee, afforded for our salvation. I concluded, that such a nature could not be born of the Virgin Mary without partaking of human flesh, which I thought must pollute it. Hence arose my fantastic ideas of Jesus,* so destructive of all piety. Thy spiritual children may smile at me with charitable sympathy, if they read these my confessions; such, however, were my views. Indeed, while I was at Carthage the discourse of one Helpidius had moved me in some degree, [c. 11.] who produced from the New Testament several powerful arguments against their positions: and their answer appeared to me to be weak, which yet they did not deliver openly, but in secret. They pretended that the Scriptures of the New Testament had been falsified by some, who desired to insert Judaism into Christianity, but they themselves produced no uncorrupted copies.† Still did I pant under those masses of materialism, and was prevented from breathing the simple and pure air of thy truth.

Some unexpected disadvantages in the way of [c. 12 & 13.] my profession laid me open to any probable offer of employ in other parts of Italy. From Milan, a requisition was made to Symmachus, prefect of Rome, to send a professor of rhetoric to that city. By the interest of my Manichean friends I obtained the honour, and came to Milan. There I waited on Ambrose the Bishop, a man renowned for piety through the world, and who then ministered the bread of life to thy people with much zeal and eloquence. The man of God received me like a father,

* It is evident that this sect comprehended in it the fundamental errors of the Docites, of whom we have spoken repeatedly.

† The Manichees, like all other heretics, could not stand before the Scriptures. They professedly rejected the Old Testament, as belonging to the malignant principle; and when they were pressed with the authority of the New, as corroborating the Old, they pretended the New was adulterated. Is there any new thing under the sun? Did not Lord Bolingbroke set up the authority of St. John against St. Paul? Have we not heard of some parts of the Gospels as not genuine, because they suit not Socinian views? Genuine Christian principles alone will bear the test, nor fear the scrutiny of the whole word of God.

and I conceived an affection for him, not as a teacher of truth, which I had no idea of discovering in thy Church, but as a man kind to me; and I studiously attended his lectures, only with a curious desire of discovering whether fame had done justice to his eloquence or not. I stood indifferent and fastidious with respect to his matter, and at the same time was delighted with the sweetness of his language, more learned indeed, but less soothing and agreeable than that of Faustus. In their thoughts there was no comparison; the latter erred in Manichean fallacies, the former taught salvation in the most salutary manner. But salvation is far from sinners, such as I then was, and yet I was gradually approaching to it and knew it not. As I now despaired of finding the way to God, I had [c. 14.] no concern with sentiment; language alone I chose to regard. But the ideas which I neglected came into my mind, together with the words with which I was pleased. I gradually was brought to attend to the doctrine of the bishop. I found reason to rebuke myself for the hasty conclusions I had formed of the perfectly indefensible nature of the law and the prophets. A number of difficulties, started upon them by the Manichees, found in the expositions of Ambrose a satisfactory solution. The possibility of finding truth in the Church of Christ appeared; and I began to consider by what arguments I might convict Manicheism of falsehood. Could I have formed an idea of a spiritual substance, their whole fabric had been overturned, but I could not. Moreover, I found that the philosophers in general explained the system of nature better than the Manichees. It seemed shameful to continue in connexion with a sect replete with such evident absurdities, that I could not but prefer to them the Pagan philosophers, though I dared not trust these with the healing of my soul, because they were without the saving name of Christ. In conclusion, I determined to remain a catechumen in the church recommended to me by my parents, till I saw my way more clearly.

BOOK VI.

O THOU! my hope from my youth, where wast thou? Thou madest me wiser than the fowls of heaven; yet I

walked through darkness and slippery places. My mother was now come to me, courageous [c. 1.] through piety, following me by land and sea, and secure of thy favour in all dangers. She found me very hopeless with respect to the discovery of truth. However, when I told her my present situation, she answered, that she believed in Christ, that before she left this world she should see me a sound believer. To thee her prayers and tears were still more copious, that thou wouldest perfect what thou hadst begun, and with much zeal and affection she attended the ministry of Ambrose. Him she loved as an angel of God, because she understood that I had broken off from Manichean connexions through his means, and she confidently expected me to pass from sickness to health, though with a critical danger in the interval.

She had been used to bring bread and wine for the commemoration of the saints ; and [would still have continued] the African custom, [but] she was [c. 2.] prohibited by the door-keeper, understanding [however] that the bishop had forbidden the practice,—[she readily complied with his injunction.] Another person would not soon have been obeyed, but Ambrose was her favourite, and was himself amazed at the promptitude of her obedience. The reasons of the prohibition were, the fear of excess, and the danger of superstition, the practice itself being very similar to those of the Pagans.* Instead therefore of a canister full of the fruits of the earth, she henceforward, on the commemoration-days of the martyrs, gave alms, according to her ability, to the poor, and received the Lord's Supper, if it was celebrated on those occasions. Ambrose himself was charmed with the fervour of her piety and the amiableness of her good works, and often brake out in his preaching, when he saw me, congratulating me that I had such a mother, little knowing what sort of a son she had, who doubted of all these things, and even apprehended that the way of life could not be found.—Nor did I groan to thee in prayer for help, being intent only on study, and restless in discussions and investigations. In [c. 3.]

* Here is a striking instance of the growth of Pagan superstition in the church. The torrent was strong, and notwithstanding occasional checks which it received, at length overspread all Christendom, and quite obscured the light of the Gospel.

a secular view, Ambrose himself appeared to be a happy man, revered as he was by the imperial court; only his celibacy appeared to me in a melancholy light. But what hope he bore within, what struggles he had against the temptations of grandeur, what was his real comfort in adversity, his hidden strength and joy derived from the bread of Life, of these things I could form no idea; for I had no experience of them; nor did he know the fluctuations of my soul, nor the dangerous pit in which I was enslaved. It was out of my power to consult him as I could wish, surrounded as he was with crowds of persons, whose necessities he relieved. During the little time in which he was from them, (and the time was but little) he either refreshed his body with food, or his mind with reading.—Hence I had no opportunity to unbosom myself to him. A few words of conversation sufficed not. I expected in vain to find him at leisure for a long conversation.* I profited, however, by his sermons. Every Lord's day I heard him instructing the people, and I was more and more convinced of the falsity of the calumnies which those deceivers had invented against the divine books. And when I found, that the Mosaic expression of man made after the image of God, was understood by no believer to imply that God was in human form, though I still could form no idea of a spiritual substance, I was glad, and blushed to think how many years I had falsely accused the Church, instead of learning by careful inquiry.†

[c. 4.] The state of my mind was now something altered; ashamed of past miscarriages and delusions, and hence the more anxious to be guided right for the time to come. I was completely convinced of the falsehood of the many things I had once uttered with so much confidence. I was pleased to find, that the Church of Christ was plainly free from the monstrous absurdity of which I had accused her. I found, too, that thy holy men

* Doubtless, could the modesty of Augustine have prevailed on him to desire such a conference, he might have obtained it. And what a bishop then was, may be seen in Ambrose.

† A remarkable instance of partiality, attended with a remarkable frankness of confession. Augustine for nine years believed that the general church held the corporeal form of the Supreme Being, though he might with ease have learned the contrary at any time. But heresy in all ages acts in the same disingenuous spirit.

of old held not those sentiments with which they were charged. And I was pleased to find Ambrose very diligently commending a rule to his people, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;"* when the bishop, removing the mystic veil, opened to us those things, which according to the letter might seem to teach perverseness: what he said was agreeable to me, though I was far from being convinced of its truth.† My former mistakes and blameable rashness rendered me now exceedingly sceptical, and I wanted the fullest intuitive evidence. By faith, indeed, I might have been healed; but having experienced a bad physician, I now dreaded a good one. By believing alone could I be cured; yet for fear of believing false things, I refused to be healed, resisting thy hands, who has made for us the medicines of faith, and hast sprinkled them over the diseases of the world, and hast attributed so great authority to them.

I could not, however, but prefer the general doctrine of the church, and think it was more reasonable to enjoin faith in subjects incapable of demonstration, [c. 5.] than to require the belief of most absurd fables after pretending to promise us knowledge. By degrees, thou, Lord, with a mild and merciful hand regulating and composing my heart, enabledst me to consider how many things I believed which I had never seen, what credit I gave to friends, to physicians, to many others, without which the common affairs of life could never be transacted; also, how firmly I believed who were my parents, though I could not possibly have any demonstration concerning the matter. Thus thou persuadest me, that those who believed thy books were not to be condemned for credulity, but those who disbelieved them were to be condemned for unreasonable obstinacy, especially as their credibility was established by the great authority which they had obtained throughout the world.

* An important observation surely! abused much by Origen, and many of his followers, to fanciful and capricious purposes. In Augustine, however, the distinction between letter and spirit was generally made commensurate with that between flesh and spirit, and in effect distinguished self-righteous from evangelical religion.

† It would be well, if many, who stumble at the Old Testament, were more convinced of their own ignorance and incompetency, for want of a just and solid acquaintance with its typical nature, and the laws of interpreting it.

"How do you know that those books were divinely inspired?" appeared to me now a question implying a doubt not worthy to be attended to. For, amidst all the contentiousness of philosophers, which had so much agitated my mind, I had ever preserved the belief of thy existence and Divine providence. Sometimes, indeed, this belief was stronger, sometimes weaker, yet it never left me, notwithstanding my great perplexity concerning thy nature, or the way of approaching thee. As we are too infirm to discover truth by abstract reasoning, and therefore need the authority of divine revelation, I apprehended, that thou wouldest never have given such high authority and influence to the Scriptures through the world, unless this had been the appointed means of our knowing thee, and seeking thy will; and now the absurdities, which the literal interpretation of many things seems to involve, after I had heard a probable exposition of several of them, I referred to the depth of mysteries; and hence the authority of thy book appeared more venerable and more credible, as it lay open to every one's view, and yet reserved the dignity of the secret by the most profound sentiments; offering themselves to all in a language the most open and the most humble, and exercising the attention of serious minds. I considered these things, and thou wast present with me; I sighed, and thou heardest me; I fluctuated, and thou directedst my course; I went along the broad way of the world, and thou didst not desert me.*

[c. 6.] My heart was thirsting after honours, profits, and marriage, and thou deridedst me. In these lusts I suffered the bitterest difficulties; thou being so much the more propitious, the less thou sufferedst any thing

* We have seen here the close thoughts of an original thinker, who had once as strong a prejudice as any against Scripture truth; owning his rashness in condemning what he had not understood; convinced of the rationality of the Scriptures, after he had in some measure discovered the true key to their meaning; persuaded of their divinity, from their providential propagation in the world; owning the unreasonableness of expecting demonstration, and of refusing assent to grounds of faith such as determine us in common life; spying a divine beauty in the plainness and simplicity of their language, adapted to all capacities: and comprehending at length the necessity of a serious mind, in order to render them effectual to saving purposes. Sceptics and infidels would do well to follow him in this train of thought: they need not to be ashamed to imitate a person so acute and ingenuous.

to be pleasant to me which was not thyself. See, Lord, my heart. Now let it stick close to thee, which thou hast freed from the tenacious glue of death. How miserable was I, and how didst thou cause me to feel my misery on that day, when I was preparing to recite a panegyric to the emperor, in which there were many falsehoods, and I expected applause, even from those who knew them to be falsehoods, when my heart brooded over its anxieties, and passing through a certain street of Milan, I saw a poor beggar, I suppose at that time with a full belly, jocund and merry! I sighed, and spake to my friends who were with me, of the many pains of our madness, because from all the toils, which with so much labour and vexation we underwent, we expected only that same rest and security, which that beggar had already attained, though we were uncertain whether we should ever reach it. In truth, he was not possessed of true joy, but I, by the ambiguous windings of art, sought it in a more delusory way. He, however, was evidently merry, I full of anxiety; he at his ease, I full of fear. Were I asked, whether frame of mind I should prefer, I should without hesitation choose his. Yet if I were asked, whether I would be Augustine, or the beggar, I should say the former. How perverse was this!—Much to this purpose did I say to my friends, and often observed how things were with me: and I found myself miserable, and I grieved, and doubled that misery. And if any thing prosperous smiled upon me, I was backward to lay hold of it, because it flew away almost before I could lay hold of it.*

My most intimate conversations on these subjects were with Alypius and Nebridius. The former, my townsman, had studied under me both at Tagasta [c. 7.] and at Carthage, and we were very dear to each other.—The torrent of fashion at the latter place hurried him into the Circensian games, of which he became extravagantly fond.—I was vexed to see him give into a taste so destructive of all sobriety and prudence in youth, and cannot but take notice of the providential manner in which he was delivered. While I was one day expounding in my school

* A lively picture of human vanity, perfectly agreeable to the whole tenour of ECCLESIASTES, and evidencing the distress of those in high life to be at least equal to that of their inferiors. Ambition receives no cure from the review, till the man knows what is better.

at Carthage, an allusion to the Circensian games occurred as proper to illustrate my subject, on which occasion I severely censured those who were fond of that madness. I meant nothing for Alypius; but thou, Lord, who hadst designed him for a minister of thy word, and who wouldest make it manifest, that his correction should be thy own work, infixedst a deep sting of conviction into his heart; he believed, that I spake it on his account,* loved me the more for it, and shook off the Circensian follies. But he was afterwards involved in Manicheism with me, deceived

[c. 8.] by the appearance of good. Afterwards he came to Rome, to learn the law, and there was ensnared with a new evil, a fondness for the barbarous sports of gladiators, to which he had had a strong aversion. Some friends of his carried him to them by force, while he declared with great confidence, that his mind and eyes should still be alienated from those spectacles. For a while he closed his eyes with great resolution, till, on a certain occasion, when the whole house rang with shouting, overcome by curiosity, he opened his eyes to see what was the matter. Beholding a gladiator wounded, on the sight of the blood he was inebriated with the sanguinary pleasure.

He gazed, he shouted, he was inflamed, he carried away with him the madness, which stimulated him to repeat his visits; he became enamoured of the sports, even more than those who had dragged him thither against his will, and seduced others. Thence thou with a strong and merciful hand recoveredst him at length, but long after, and taughtest him to put his confidence not in himself, but in

[c. 9.] thee.† On another occasion, Alypius was apprehended as a thief, and circumstances seemed to tell so much against him, that it was by a particular providence his innocence was cleared. But he was to be a dispenser of thy word, an examiner of many causes in thy Church, and he learned caution and wisdom from this

* [A not very dissimilar incident is related of the Commentator Scott, on his going to hear Newton preach. See his life by his Son.]

† It is obvious to observe hence the folly of self-confidence, and the bewitching power of temptation over so weak and corrupt a creature as man. Many who would deem it impossible that they should enter with spirit into the obscenity of the stage, or the cruelties of the slave trade, by a little indulgence, may soon become what beforehand they would abhor.

event. Him I found at Rome, and he removed with me to Milan, and practised in the law with uncommon uprightness and integrity. With me, he [c. 10.] was uncertain with respect to his plan of religion and the way of happiness.

My friend Nebridius also left a good paternal estate in the neighbourhood of Carthage, for the sake of enjoying my company; and we three were panting after happiness, till thou shouldest give us meat in due season; and amidst all the bitterness which attended our worldly concerns, while we were wishing to see the end of these things, we found ourselves in darkness, and we said with sighs, How long? Yet we still followed objects with which we were dissatisfied, because we knew nothing better to substitute in their room.

As to myself in particular, I reviewed attentively how long I had been in pursuit of the true wisdom, [c. 11.] with a determination to give up secular pursuits in case of success. I had begun at nineteen, and I was now in my thirtieth year, still miserable, anxious, procrastinating, fed with tantalizing hopes, solicited in my conscience to set apart a portion of time each day for the care of my soul. "Your mornings are for your pupils: why do not you employ to serious purpose the afternoons? But then what time shall I have to attend the levees of the Great, and to unbend my mind with necessary relaxation? —What, then, if death should suddenly seize you, and judgment overtake you unprepared? Yet, on the other side, what if death itself be the extinction of my being! But far be from my soul the idea. God would never have given such high proofs of credibility to Christianity, nor have shown himself so marvellously among men, if the life of the soul be consumed with the death of the body. Why, then, do I not give myself wholly to seek God? But do not be in too great a hurry: you have friends of consequence, by whom you may rise in the world!"——

In such an agitation of mind as this did I live, seeking happiness, and yet flying from it. To be divorced from the enjoyments of the world I could not bear, particularly from female society; and as I had no idea of acquiring continency but by my own strength, I was a stranger to the

way of prayer and divine supply of grace. Thou, Lord, wilt give, if we solicit thine ears with internal groaning,

[c. 13.] and in solid faith cast our care on thee. My mother was solicitous and importunate for my being married, that I might in that state receive baptism. I promised marriage to a person who was then too young; and as she was agreeable to me, I consented to wait almost

[c. 14.] two years. During this interval, a number of us, about ten in all, formed a scheme of living in common in a society separate from the world, in which a townsman of mine, Romanianus, a man of considerable opulence, was particularly earnest. But some of us being married men, and others desirous of becoming so, the scheme came to nothing.—Thou deridedst our plans, and preparedst thy own, meaning to give us food in due season, and to open thine hand, and fill our souls with blessedness. In

[c. 15.] the mean time my sins were multiplied, and the woman with whom I had cohabited, returning into Africa under a vow of never more being acquainted with our sex, and leaving with me a natural son which I had by her, I, impatient of the delay, took another woman in her room. Praise and glory be to thee, O Fountain of

[c. 16.] mercies! I became more miserable, and thou approachedst nearer. Thou wast going to snatch me out of the mire of pollution, and I knew it not. The fear of death and future judgment was the check which restrained me. This had never left me amidst the variety of opinions with which I was agitated, and I owned to Alypius and Nebridius, that the Epicurean doctrine would have had the preference in my judgment, could I have fallen in with Epicurus's idea of the annihilation of man at death; and I inquired why we might not be happy, if we were immortal, and were to live in a perpetual state of voluptuousness without any fear of losing it; ignorant as I was of the misery of being so drenched in carnality, as not to see the excellency of embracing goodness itself for its own sake. I did not consider, that I conferred on these base topics with friends whom I loved, and was incapable of tasting pleasure, even according to the carnal ideas I then had of pleasure, without friends.*

* A strong intimation that happiness consists in love or friendship.

O my serpentine ways! Wo to the soul which presumed, if it departed from thee, that it should find any thing better. I turned on every side, and all things were hard, and thou alone wast my rest; and lo! thou comest and freest us from our miserable delusions, and placest us in thy way. and comfortest us, and sayest, "Run, and I will bear you; I will carry you through, and bear you still."

BOOK VII.

AND now the older I grew, the more defiled was I with vanity, still destitute of the spiritual idea of God; not conceiving however of thee, O Lord, as [c. 1.] existing in human form, an error of which, I now saw, I had unjustly accused the catholic church, but still viewing thee as an object of sense, however refined; and when I removed the ideas of space and quantity, thou seemedst to be nothing at all. For thou hadst not yet illuminated my darkness. The arguments of my friend Nebridius appeared to me conclusive against the Manichean idea of an independent evil principle in nature. [c. 2, 3, 4, 5.] I was grown firm in the belief, that in the Lord is nothing corruptible, mutable, or in any sense imperfect; that evil must not be imputed to him, in order that we may clear ourselves of blame, with the Manichees. Still, however, a question distressed me,—how came evil into being at all? Admitting that it lies in the will of man, that the distinction between a natural and moral inability is real and just, and that the former is not the proper subject of blame as the latter is; still I inquired, who ingrafted into my stem this scion of bitterness, seeing that I was created by Him who is infinite sweetness; I inquired whence came evil, and I saw not the evil which was in my investigations. I stated the great difficulty in various lights, and it still appeared as inexplicable as ever. The faith, however, of Christ our Lord and Saviour remained firm with me, rude and unformed indeed; yet my mind forsook it not, and was imbibing it daily more and more.*

Whence the pleasure of friendship with Jesus, an Almighty, all-sufficient friend, made man for us, and sympathizing with us, appears to give us the just and adequate idea of bliss.

* I have endeavoured to compress the author's accounts of his difficulties in these two questions of the substance of God, and of the origin of evil;

[c. 6.] From the vain science of astrology also, which I had cultivated with obstinacy, I was delivered, partly by the reasonings of my excellent friend Nebridius, and partly by a story which I heard of a master and slave born at the same point of time, whose different fortunes in life appeared to be a sufficient confutation of all predictions by the stars; * and the case of Esau and Jacob in holy writ illustrated the same thing. But it was thou, and thou only, who recalledst me from the death of all error, O thou life that knowest not death, and thou wisdom who illuminatest indigent minds. Thou breakest this bond [c. 7.] for me; still was I seeking whence comes evil. Yet, by all the fluctuations of thought thou didst not suffer me to be seduced from the faith of thy existence, of thy perfections, of thy providence, or to doubt that in Christ thy Son, and in the Scriptures, thou hast laid down the way of salvation. What were the groanings, the labours of my heart! While I silently inquired, distressed and confounded, thou knewest the whole, thou knewest what I suffered, and no man whatever, not my most intimate friends, could know, by any description which I could give, the bitterness of my soul. My folly was, to look for a local, external happiness. No such was found to receive me. By the original dignity of my nature, I was above all sensual objects; and thou, my true joy, madest me subject to thyself, and subjectedst to me the works of thy hands. This was the middle region of health, in which I might serve thee and rule the body. But I proudly rose up against thee, and was justly punished, by being enslaved to those things which should have been my subjects; they gave me no respite nor rest. My pride separated me from thee, and closed my eyes with its own tumid importance. But thou, Lord, remainest for ever, and retainest not anger

into a small compass, not thinking it needful to translate them at large. Manicheism was the cause of his trouble in regard to the former. The latter is in all ages a natural temptation to our proud minds, and we are slow to learn to answer it with St. Paul: Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Rom. ix. Humility will end the subject there; and pride is not to be satisfied by any investigations.

* Few men have candour enough to put themselves in the places and scenes of others. Nothing is more certain than this, that Augustine and Melancthon were men of extraordinary understanding; both however were addicted to astrology, an absurdity, which even the weakest in our age escapes. Such is the difference of the times!

for ever; thou pitiedst us, and rememberest that we are dust and ashes. It pleased thee to [c. 8.] remove my deformities, and by internal incentives thou agitatedst me, that I might be impatient till thou madest thyself assuredly known to me by internal illumination. The morbid tumours of my mind were gradually lessening under thy secret medicinal hand, and the eyes of my understanding, darkened and confounded as they were, by the sharp eye-salve of salutary pains, were healing day by day.

And first, as thou wouldest show me how thou resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble; and how great thy mercy is shown to be in the way [c. 9.] of humility; thou procuredst for me, by means of a person highly inflated with philosophical pride, some of the books of Plato translated into Latin, in which I read passages concerning the Divine Word, similar to those in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel; in which his eternal divinity was exhibited, but not his incarnation, his atonement, his humiliation, and glorification of his human nature. For thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; that men might come to thee weary and heavy-laden, and that thou mightest refresh them: thou, who art meek and lowly in heart, who directest the meek in judgment, and teachest the gentle thy ways, seeing our low estate, and forgiving all our sins. This is a knowledge not to be attained, while men are lifted up by the pomp and grandeur of what appears to them a sublimer doctrine. Thus did I begin to form better views of the Divine nature, even from Plato's writings, as thy people of old spoiled the Egyptians of their gold; because whatever good there is in any thing is all thy own; and at the same time I was enabled to escape the evil which was in those books, and not to attend to the idols of Egypt.

However, I was hence admonished to retire into myself under thy guidance, and I was enabled to do it, [c. 10.] because thou art my helper. I entered, and saw with the eye of my mind the immutable light of the Lord, perfectly distinct from sensible light, not only in degree, but in kind. Nor was it in the same manner above my mind, that oil is above water, (or as heaven is above

earth,) * but superior, because he made me, and I was inferior, because made by him.† He who knows truth, knows this light, and he who knows it, knows eternity. Love knows it. O eternal truth, true love, and loving eternity! Thou art my God, I pant after thee day and night. And when I first knew thee, thou tookest me that I might see that "to be" which I saw; and that I who saw, "as yet was not." Thou impressedst repeatedly my infirm sight, thou shinedst on me vehemently, and I trembled with love and horror, and I found that I was far from thee in a region of dissimilitude, as if I heard thy voice from on high, "I am the food of those that are of full age; grow, and thou shalt eat me." Nor shalt thou change me into thyself, but shalt thyself be changed into me. And I said, can God be nothing, since he is neither diffused through finite nor infinite space? And thou criedst from afar, "I am that I am,"‡ and I heard with my heart, and could not doubt. Nay I should sooner doubt my own existence, than the truth of that which is understood by the things that were made.

[c. 12 & 13.] I now began to understand, that every creature of thine hand is in its nature good, and that universal nature is justly called on to praise the Lord for his goodness.§ The evil which I sought after has no positive existence; were it a substance it would be good, because every thing individually, as well as all things collectively, is good. Evil appeared to be a want of agreement in some parts to others. My opinion of the two independent principles, in order to account for the origin of evil, was without foundation. Evil is not a thing to be created; let good things only forsake their just place, office and order, and then, though all be good in their nature, evil, which is only a privative, abounds and produces positive misery. I asked what was iniquity, and I found

* [There is nothing in the original for the words within brackets.]

† He had been long corrupted by the Atheistic views which he had learned from the Manichees, and no wonder that he now found it so difficult to conceive aright of God. There appears something divinely spiritual in the manner of his deliverance. That the Platonic books also should give the first occasion is very remarkable: though I apprehend the Latin translation which he saw, had improved on Plato, by the mixture of something scriptural, according to the manner of the Ammonian philosophers.

‡ Exodus iii. § Psalm cxlviii.

it to be no substance, but a perversity of the will, which declines from thee the Supreme Substance to lower things, and casts away its internal excellences, and swells with pride externally.* [c. 16.]

And I wondered that I now began to have a desire after thee, and no longer took a phantasm for thee. I was not urgent to enjoy thee, my God, for [c. 17.] though I was hurried toward thee, by thy beauty, I was presently carried downward from thee by my own weight, and I could no longer sin without groaning; the weight was carnal habit. The memory of thee was with me, and I did not doubt of the reality of that divine essence to which I should adhere, but of myself being ever brought into a state of spiritual existence. I saw thy invisible things by the things which were made, but I could not fix my attention to thee; my corruption exerting itself, I returned to my usual habits, but I could not shake off the fragrance of memory, smelling the true good, regretting the loss, and impotent to taste and enjoy.†

I now sought the way of obtaining strength to enjoy thee, and found it not, till I embraced the mediator between God and man, the man Christ [c. 18.] Jesus, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER,‡ calling and saying, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. For the Word was made flesh, that thy wisdom might suckle our infancy. But I did not yet in humility hold the humble Jesus, my Lord, nor know the mysterious power of his weakness, that he might humble, nourish, and at length exalt heavy-laden souls. Far other thoughts had I conceived of Christ. I had viewed him only as a man of unequalled wisdom. But, of the [c. 19.]

* Perhaps a more just account of the manner in which evil is produced can scarcely be given; it is certainly well calculated to confute the principles of Manicheism.

† In many true converts this was their state exactly, while God was turning them from darkness to light. Such a sense of God, as never before was known, is attained, sufficient to conquer the false and injurious thoughts of him, which had been before imbibed, be they what they may. But the man feels his impotence with respect to good, and he must, with Augustine, struggle and endure for a time, till the strength of Jesus is perfected in his weakness.

‡ Here is a clear testimony to the authenticity and genuine interpretation of that remarkable text. Rom. ix. 5, the light of which has been so peculiarly offensive to those whom fashionable heresies in our age have darkened.

mystery of the Word made flesh, I had not formed the least suspicion. Only I concluded from the things written of him, that he must have had a human soul. Alypius indeed had conceived, that the catholic faith denied him the spirit of a man, and was a longer time prejudiced against the truth, because he confounded the Church with the Apollinarian heresy. As to myself, I was not till some time after taught to distinguish the truth from the opinion of Photinus;* but there must be heresies, that they who are of the truth may be made manifest.

But when, by reading the Platonic books, I began to conceive of the immaterial infinite Supreme, I talked of these things like a person of experience, but was perishing, because, void of Christ, I desired to appear wise, was puffed up with knowledge, and wept not. Love, on the foundation of humility, which is Christ Jesus, was to me unknown. The books of Plato knew not this; still would I remark the providence of my God, in leading me to study them, before I searched the Scriptures, that I might remember how I had been affected by them; and when afterwards my wounds should be healed by thy hand through the Scriptures, I might distinguish the difference between presumption and confession, between those who see whither we ought to go, without knowing the means, and those who see the way itself leading to the actual inheritance. Had I been informed at first by thy Scriptures, and thou hadst endeared thyself to me in their familiarity, an after-acquaintance with Plato might either have shaken my faith, or raised in me an undue estimation of the worth of his writings. [c. 20]

With eagerness, therefore, I took up the inspired volume,† and particularly the Apostle Paul; and those questions, in which he once had seemed inconsistent with himself, and the law, and the prophets, were now no more. There now appeared one uniform tenour of godliness, and I learnt to rejoice with trembling, and I took up the book, and found whatever truth I had read there, is said with this recommendation of thy grace, [c. 21]

* Which seems to have been the same with Sabellianism.

† It may be remarked here, how depraved the taste of man is, and how much and how long he will suffer before he give himself simply to the instruction of God's own words.

that he who sees should not SO GLORY AS IF HE HAD NOT RECEIVED, not only that which he sees, but the power of seeing itself.* For what hath he, which he hath not received? And he who cannot see afar, should however walk in the way, by which he may come, see, and lay hold. For though he be delighted WITH THE LAW OF GOD IN THE INWARD MAN, YET WHAT SHALL HE DO WITH THE OTHER LAW IN HIS MEMBERS WARRING AGAINST THE LAW OF HIS MIND, AND BRINGING HIM INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE LAW OF SIN, WHICH IS IN HIS MEMBERS?† For thou, Lord, art just, but we have sinned and dealt wickedly, and thy hand is heavy upon us, and we are justly delivered up to the power of the old sinner who has the power of death, because he persuaded us to follow his will, by which he did not stand in the truth. Who shall deliver us from the body of this death, but thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom the prince of this world could find nothing worthy of death, and who by his death blotted out the hand-writing that was against us? The Platonic books had nothing of this, nor the face of piety, the tears of confession, the sacrifice of a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart, salvation, the spouse, the holy city, the earnest of the Holy Spirit, the cup of our redemption. In them no one hears, "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. It is one thing to see a land of peace at a distance, with no practicability of attaining it, and another to pursue the right road towards it, under the care of the heavenly Commander, who made the road for our use. I was wonderfully affected with these views, while I read THE LEAST OF THINE APOSTLES, and I considered thy works and trembled.

BOOK VIII.

ALL MY BONES SHALL SAY, LORD, WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE? Thou hast broken my [bonds] in sunder. How thou brakest them, I will relate; and all who worship thee, when

* He means the inestimable privilege of spiritual understanding, through his want of which, St. Paul had long appeared to him contradictory, confused, and disgusting. The man is well qualified to recommend to others the value of divine teaching, who, like Augustine, is experiencing it in himself. Nothing teaches humility like such experience.

† Rom. vii. 22, 23.

they hear these things, shall bless the Lord. Though now confirmed in my doctrinal views, my heart was yet uncleansed. I approved of the Saviour, in general, who is the Way, but was offended with his narrow way, and thou inspiredst me with a desire of going to Simplician, an aged, experienced Christian, even from his youth, who seemed capable of instructing me in my present fluctuations.—My desires no longer being inflamed with the hope of honour and money, I was displeased with the servitude of the world in which I lived. Thy sweetness was now more agreeable in mine eyes; but another tie still detained me, in which I had permission indeed in a legal way, though exhorted to the higher and nobler practice of celibacy.*—I had heard from the mouth of Truth, that there are eunuchs, WHO HAVE MADE THEMSELVES EUNUCHS FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN'S SAKE.

I went then to Simplician, the spiritual father of bishop Ambrose himself, who loved him as his father. I [c. 2.] explained to him my religious situation. When I was relating, that I had read some Platonic books translated by Victorinus, a Roman rhetorician, who had died a Christian, he congratulated me on having met with that philosopher rather than any of the rest; because they are full of fallacy, but in him intimations are given of God and of his word.† Then, for my practical instruction, he gave me the narrative of the conversion of Victorinus, with whom he had been intimate at Rome. Thy grace was indeed admirable in that convert. He was a man of great learning, far advanced in life, well skilled in all liberal knowledge; he had read, criticised, and illustrated many philosophers; he had taught many illustrious senators; had been honoured by a statue erected in the Roman Forum, as a reward of his labours; and even to his old age was a worshipper of idols, and a partaker of all the rites, to which almost the whole Roman nobility at that time were addicted; moreover, he had, many years, defended the monstrous and absurd objects of worship, to which the common people had

* 1 Corinthians vii. 7.

† Here I apprehend is a proof of the decay of Christian taste in the church at that time, the consequence of Ammonianism and Origenism, namely, a disposition to find in Plato what he has not. What communion hath the temple of God with idols?

been accustomed, but now he was not ashamed to become a child of thy Christ, an infant of thy fountain, with his neck subjected to the yoke of humility, and his forehead subdued to the reproach of the cross. O Lord, thou, who bowedst the heavens and camest down, who touchedst the mountains, and they smoked, by what means didst thou insinuate thyself into his heart! He read, as Simplician told me, the Holy Scripture, and studiously investigated all Christian literature, and told my instructor, not openly, but in secrecy as to a friend, "Know that I am already a Christian." He answered, "I shall not believe it, nor rank you among Christians, till I see you in the Church of Christ." But he smiling, answered, "Do walls then make Christians?" This kind of dialogue was frequently repeated between them. For Victorinus feared to offend his friends, men of rank and dignity, and he dreaded the loss of reputation. But after that, by further studying of the word, and by secret prayer, he had acquired more strength, and feared to be denied by Christ before the angels, if he denied him before men, and felt himself condemned for being ashamed of Christian sacraments, though he had not been ashamed of demon-worship, he blushed at his false modesty, and suddenly said to Simplician, "Let us go to the Church, I wish to be made a Christian." The venerable old saint, unable to contain his joy, went with him, when he was imbued with the first sacraments of instruction. Not long after, he gave in his name, that he might have the benefit of Christian baptism.* Rome was astonished; the church rejoiced. The proud saw and were indignant, and gnashed with their teeth and pined away; but the Lord his God was the hope of thy servant, and he no longer regarded lying vanities. At length, when the season came on of professing his belief, which profession is usually delivered at Rome from a high place, in the sight of the faithful, in a certain form of words gotten by heart, by those who are to partake of thy grace in baptism, an offer was made by the presbyters, that he should repeat them more secretly, as was the custom for some who were likely to be disturbed through bashfulness. But he chose rather to profess his salvation in the sight of the holy multitude; for there was no salvation

* [Ut per baptismum regeneraretur are Augustine's words.]

in rhetoric, and yet he had publicly professed it. When he mounted the pulpit to repeat,—all who knew him, (and who was there that did not know him?) with a whisper of congratulation resounded his name. Amidst the general joy, the sound, though checked with decent reverence, went round, "Victorinus, Victorinus!" [There was a sudden sound of exultation at the sight of him and as sudden a silence] that they might hear him. He pronounced the form of words with an excellent confidence, and all wished to hold him in their bosom, and they actually did so in love and joy.*

[c. 3.] O gracious God! what is the cause, that men more rejoice in the salvation of a soul despaired of, than if it had always been in a state of security! For even thou, merciful Father! rejoicest more over one penitent, than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance, and we hear with peculiar pleasure the recovery of thy prodigal son. Now what is the reason, that the mind is more delighted with things recovered, than with things never lost? Human life is full of such instances. Is this the law of human happiness? How high art thou in the highest, and how inscrutable in the deepest! Thou never recedest from us, and with reluctance we return to

[c. 4.] thee. Awake, O Lord, and do, quicken and recal us, inflame and carry us along; burn, be sweet to our taste, and let us now love and run. The joy of Victorinus's conversion indeed was greater, because his influence and authority, it was hoped, might be useful to the salvation of many. For, far be it from thee, that in thy house there should be respect of persons, since thou RATHER HAST CHOSEN THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD TO CONFOUND THE STRONG, AND BASE THINGS OF THE WORLD, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.† What a treasure had the heart and tongue of Victorinus been to Satan! Well did it be-

* I thought a careful translation of this story was proper. It is an instance of victorious grace, something like that which we have more at large related by Augustine concerning himself. It shows how disreputable real Christianity was among the great, even in countries where it was the established religion, as was then the case at Rome; and what grace is needful to cause men to be willing to bear the cross of Christ; and it illustrates also some Christian customs and discipline at that time.

† 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

come thy sons to exult, because our King had bound the strong man, and they saw his goods taken from him, and cleansed, and fitted for thy honour, and to every good work.

Hearing these things from Simplician, I was inflamed with the desire of imitation. But after he had informed me further that Victorinus, on occasion [c. 5.] of Julian's prohibitory law, had given up his professorship, I found an inclination to imitate him, bound as I was, to the same calling, not by a foreign chain, but by my own iron will. The enemy held my will, thence formed my chain, and held me fast. From a perverse will was formed lust, from the indulgence of lust was formed habit, and habit unresisted became necessity. Of such links was my chain of slavery composed; and the new will, which was beginning in me, to worship thee freely, and enjoy thee, my sole certain pleasure, was not yet strong enough to overcome the old one, hardened by custom. Thus two wills, the old and the new, the flesh and the spirit, contended within me, and between them tore my very soul.* Thus did I understand by my own experience what I had read, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.† I indeed was actuated by both, but more by that which I approved, than by that which I disapproved.—I had now no just excuse; truth was certain to me, yet I was loth to serve thee, and was as afraid to be rid of my impediments, as I ought to have been of contracting them. My meditations on thee, were like the attempts of men desirous of awaking, but sinking again into sleep.—I had not a heart to answer thee, AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT.‡ By and by—shortly—let me alone a little—these were the answers of my heart. But, by and by had no bounds, and let me alone a little, went to a great length. In vain was I delighted with thy law in the inner man, when another law

* Excellent comment on Rom. vii.—A description only to be fully understood by experienced Christians.

† Galat. v. where the same subject is more briefly handled: the conflict is well known to true Christians all their days, though it most strikes their mind at first. In the unconverted it can have no existence, because the will is inclined only one way, and it is therefore quite a different thing from the conflict between reason and passion, with which it has been confounded.

‡ Ephesians v. 14.

in my members warred against the law of my mind. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death, but thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord?

My anxiety increasing, I daily groaned to thee, I frequented thy church as often as I had leisure from
[c. 6.] those employments under the weight of which I groaned. Alypius was with me during his vacation from the law, which was his practice, as rhetoric was mine. Our other friend, Nebridius, was gone to assist Verecundus at Milan, in teaching grammar, who studiously avoided attendance upon the great, that he might command leisure to improve his mind. On a certain day, Politian, an African, one of our townsmen, came to visit me and Alypius. We sat down to converse, and upon the play-table which was before us, he saw a book, opened it, and found it to be the Apostle Paul, to his great surprise; for he supposed it to have been a book relating to my profession. He, though a soldier at court, was a devout person, and congratulated me on my taste. On my informing him, how earnestly I studied those epistles, he gave me an account of Anthony the Egyptian monk, a character to that hour unknown to us; he informed us also of a number of monasteries, of which we knew nothing. There was even a monastery at Milan under the care of Ambrose at that time, of which we had not heard.* When he had given a narration also
[c. 7.] of two of his companions, who suddenly gave themselves up to God in the same way, and forsook the world, I felt myself confounded. About twelve years had now elapsed from the nineteenth year of my life, when I read Cicero's Hortensius, to this time since I had begun to seek wisdom, and I was yet at a distance from joy. In the entrance on youth, I had prayed for chastity, and had said, "Give me chastity and continence, but grant not my request immediately." For I was afraid, lest thou shouldest quickly hear my prayer, and heal this distemper of concupiscence, which I wished rather to be fully grati-

* Should the serious reader find himself inclined to blame this monastic taste, I agree with him: but let the principle have its just praise; it originated in a desire of freedom from the temptations of the world; and let professors of godliness observe, how much the excessive indulgence of the commercial spirit prevents their own progress in our times.

fied than extinguished. And I had gone on perversely in depraved superstition, with a heart at enmity against thy truth, and had deferred from day to day to devote myself to thee, under the pretence that I was uncertain where the truth lay. Now that it was certain, I was still a slave, and "I hear of others, who have not studied ten or twelve years as I have done, and who, notwithstanding, have given themselves up to God." Such were my thoughts. What pains did I not take to stir my reluctant spirit! My arguments were spent, a silent trepidation remained, and I dreaded deliverance itself as death.—"What is this," said I to Alypius, "which you have heard? Illiterate men rise and seize heaven, while we, with all our learning, are rolling in the filth of sin." [c. 8.] In the agitation of my spirit I retired into the garden belonging to the house, knowing how evil I was, but ignorant of the good thou hadst in store for me. Alypius followed me, and we sat remote from the house, and with vehement indignation I rebuked my sinful spirit, because it would not give itself up to God. I found I wanted a will. Still was I restrained, and thou, in secret, wast urgent upon me with severe mercy. Vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, shook my vesture of flesh, and whispered, Are we to part? and for ever? [c. 11.] The evil suggestions which I felt, may thy mercy avert from the soul of thy servant! Canst thou live without us? they said; but with less and less power. On the other hand appeared the chaste dignity of Continence. Canst thou not, said she, perform what many of both sexes have performed, not in themselves indeed, but in the strength of the Lord? Cast thyself on him, fear not, he will not suffer thee to fall. Turn a deaf ear to the suggestions of the flesh; they speak of pleasure, but not as the law of thy God. Such was my internal controversy. When deep meditation had collected all my misery into the view of my heart, a great storm arose, producing a large shower of tears. [c. 12.] To give it vent, I rose up hastily from Alypius. The sound of my voice appeared pregnant with weeping, and he remained motionless in the same place. I prostrated myself under a fig-tree, and with tears bursting out, I spake to this effect: How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry?

for ever? remember not my old iniquities. For I perceived myself entangled by them. How long shall I say to-morrow? why should not this hour put an end to my slavery? Thus I spake, and wept in the bitterness of my soul, and I heard a voice, as from a neighbouring house, repeating frequently, "Take up and read, take up and read." I paused, and began to think, whether I ever had heard boys use such a speech in any play, and could recollect nothing like it. I then concluded that I was ordered from heaven, to take up the book, and read the first sentence I cast mine eyes upon. I returned hastily to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there I had placed the book of St. Paul's Epistles. I seized it, opened, and read what first struck my eyes; "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Nor did I choose to read any thing more, nor had I occasion. Immediately at the end of this sentence, all my doubts vanished. I closed the book, and with a tranquil countenance gave it to Alypius. He begged to see what I had read, I showed him it, and he read still further.* "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye;" which he applied to himself, as he told me. With a placid serenity and composure suitable to his character, in which he far excelled me, he joined with me in going to my mother, who now triumphed in the abundant answers given to her petitions. Thus didst thou turn her mourning into joy.

BOOK IX.

O LORD, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid, thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. [I will offer unto thee the sacrifice of praise.] Let my heart and tongue, and all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto thee? and do thou answer me, and say to my soul, I am thy salvation. Who and what am I? what evil am I not? Was it my will or words, or deeds, that have done it? No: but thou, Lord, good and merciful, by thy powerful right hand delivered me from the depths of misery; and thoroughly cleansed the very bottom of my heart of

[c. 1.]

* Rom. xiii. end, and xiv. beginning.

all its corruptions. The whole of my evil lay in a will stubbornly set in opposition to thine. But where lay my free-will of old time, and from what deep secret was it called out in a moment, by which I bowed my neck to thy easy yoke, and my shoulders to thy light burden, Christ Jesus, my helper and Redeemer? How sweet was it, in a moment to be free from those delightful vanities, to lose which had been my dread, to part with which was now my joy! Thou ejectedst them, O my true and consummate delight, and thou enteredst in their room, O sweeter than all pleasure, but not to flesh and blood; clearer than all light, but to the inner man; higher than all honour, but not to those who are high in their own conceits. Now was my mind set free from the corroding cares of avarice and ambition and lust, and I conversed familiarly with thee, my light, my riches, my Saviour, and my God.

I determined in thy sight to give up my employments, not abruptly, but gradually.* And opportunely, [c. 2.] the vintage vacation being at hand, I resolved to continue in my employment till that time. I was glad also, that I had an opportunity of saying to my scholars, what was true, that the care of my health, which had suffered much from fatigue, obliged me to cease from the laborious office of teaching. And to have given up the work before the vacation, might have appeared arrogant, and exposed me to the censure of vanity. But should any of thy servants think, that I did wrong in remaining in the

* I would suggest four particular remarks on the narrative of our author's conversion. 1. That it does please God in every age to distinguish some of the works of his Holy Spirit by extraordinary circumstances. It is of little consequence, to debate whether the voice heard in the garden was miraculous or not, whether literally true, or an impression on his mind. Either way it was equally from God, and sheds a lustre on the conversion of a great and eminently holy personage, who was called to testify remarkably for God in his day. 2. There is generally some master-sin, which impedes the work of God in all his people; Augustine's was sensuality, and in the mortification of that master-sin the grace of God is peculiarly illustrated. 3. The great medium of deliverance always is, the written word of God testifying of Jesus, and salvation only by putting him on through faith. 4. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. In our weakness thoroughly felt, God appears. Is it to be wondered, that the saint before us proved so strong and zealous a champion of the effectual grace of God, and was made use of to revive the clear doctrine of it in the church, and was trained up by his own experience to defend it against the subtilties of Pelagius? He who foresaw what Pelagius would introduce, in his adorable wisdom, thus provided an experienced pastor of his church, who in due time should withstand his corruptions.

chair of deceit a day longer, I will not contend. But hast not thou, most merciful Lord, washed away this, with all my other deadly sins, in the laver of regeneration?

[c. 3.] Our friend Verecundus was seized with a distemper, and, receiving baptism in the midst of it, departed this life in thy faith and fear.—Not long after my conversion, my friend Nebridius also, though he had sunk into the error which takes away the proper manhood of thy Son, was recovered; and becoming a faithful Christian, in Africa his own country, quitted this tabernacle of clay, and now lives in Abraham's bosom. He no more puts his ear to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth to thy fountain, to receive as much wisdom as he is capable of—happy without end.

[c. 4.] It is pleasant to me to remember and confess how thou didst teach me and my friend Alypius, in the country, where we enjoyed the affectionate and sedulous care of my mother. We were both in the capacity of catechumens, and I read with pleasure the Psalms of David. With what mingled pity and indignation did I look on the Manichees, who madly rejected the antidote of life. O that they saw the internal eternal life, which because I had tasted, I grieved that I could not show it to them!—

[c. 5.] The holidays being finished, I signified to my scholars, that they must provide themselves another teacher.—And I wrote to Ambrose on account of my errors, and of my present desire; and begged him to recommend some part of thy word more particularly to my attention, as a proper preparative for baptism. He pointed out to me the prophet Isaiah, I apprehend, on account of his superior perspicuity in opening the Gospel. However, finding the first part of this prophet more obscure, and apprehending the rest to be similar, I deferred the reading of him, till I was more experienced in the Scriptures.—The time approaching in which I must give

[c. 6.] in my name, I left the country and returned to Milan. There I received baptism with Alypius and the boy Adeodatus, the fruit of my sin. He was almost fifteen years old, and, in understanding, he exceeded many learned men. I glorify thee for thy gifts, my God;

for I had nothing in the boy but sin. For that I brought him up in thy religion, thou, and thou only, inspiredst me. I looked with trembling at his prodigious genius. But thou soon removedst him from the earth, and I remember him with greater satisfaction, as I have now no anxiety for his childhood, his youth, or his manhood. Nor could I at that time be satisfied with contemplating the mystery of redemption. The hymns and songs of thy church moved my soul intensely; thy truth was distilled by them into my heart; the flame of piety was kindled, and my tears flowed for joy.—This practice of singing had been of no long standing at Milan. It began about the year when Justina persecuted Ambrose. The pious [c. 7.] people watched in the church, prepared to die with their pastor. There my mother sustained an eminent part in watching and praying. Then hymns and psalms, after the manner of the East, were sung, with a view of preserving the people from weariness; and thence the custom has spread through Christian churches.*

Thou, who makest men to be of one mind in an house, unitedst to us one of our young townsmen, Euodius, who had served in the army, and was now [c. 8.] regenerated.† We determined to return to Africa; and when we were at the mouth of the Tiber, my mother departed this life. I must not pass by the conceptions of my soul concerning her, who endured labour for my temporal birth, and laboured in heart for my spiritual birth. She had been brought up in a Christian family, but did not so much commend her mother's care, as that of a decrepid old servant of the house, who had nursed her father, whose years and character were highly respected, and who superintended the education of her master's daughters. She never suffered them to drink even water, except at meals, telling them that if they ever became mistresses, the custom of drinking would remain, but they would then indulge it in wine, not water. Yet my mother Monica, notwith-

* [There follows here in the original, an account of the finding of the bodies of the Martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius by Ambrose, and of a blind person receiving his sight, by touching the coffin with his handkerchief and then applying it to his eyes.]

† [The original here is, "Nobis ad te conversus est et baptizatus et relictâ militiâ seculari accinctus in tuâ."]

standing the care of this provident governess, when young, had learned by degrees to drink wine, having been sent to draw it for the use of the family. By what method was she delivered from this snare? Thou providest for her a malignant reproach from a maid of the house, who, in a passion, called her drunkard. From that moment she gave up the practice for ever. Thus didst thou prepare a cure for her evil practice, by the malevolent railing of another; that no man may attribute it to his own power, if his admonitions of another be attended with salutary effect.*

After her marriage with my father Patricius, she endeavoured to win him over to thy service by the amiableness of her manners, and patiently bore [c. 9.] the injuries of his unfaithfulness. She still looked for thy mercy, that, learning to believe in thee, he might become chaste. His temper was passionate, but his spirit benevolent. She knew how to bear with him when angry, by a perfect silence and composure; and when she saw him cool, would meekly expostulate with him. Many matrons in her company would complain of the blows and harsh treatment they received from their husbands, whose tempers were yet milder than that of Patricius; then she would exhort them to govern their tongues, and remember the inferiority of their condition. And when they expressed their astonishment, that it was never heard that Patricius, a man of so violent a temper, had beaten his wife, or that they ever were at variance a single day, she informed them of her plan. Those who followed it, thanked her for the good success of it; those who did not, experienced vexation. Her mother-in-law, at first, was irritated against her by the whispers of servants. But she overcame her by mild obsequiousness, insomuch that she at length informed her son of the slanders of those backbiters, and desired that they might be restrained. Thus she and her mother-in-law lived in perfect harmony. It was a great gift, which, O my God, thou gavest to her, that she never repeated any of the fierce things, which she heard from persons who were at

* I could not prevail with myself to pass over altogether this, and a few more circumstances of domestic life, which follow. Let the piety and prudence which they breathe, compensate for their simplicity. To a serious mind they will perhaps appear, not only not contemptible, but even instructive.

variance with one another, and was conscientiously exact, in saying nothing but what might tend to heal and to reconcile.

I might have been tempted to think this a small good, had I not known by grievous experience, the innumerable evils resulting to society from the contrary spirit, by which men extend mischief like a pestilence, not only repeating the words of angry enemies to angry enemies, but also adding what never had been said; whereas the human mind should not be content with negative goodness in such cases, but should endeavour to promote peace by speaking what is good, as my amiable mother did, through the effectual teaching of thy Spirit. At length, in the extremity of life, she gained her husband to thee, and he died in the faith of Christ.

It was through thy secret appointment that she and I stood alone at a window, in a house at the mouth of the Tiber, where we were preparing ourselves for our voyage. Our discourse was highly agreeable, and forgetting the past, we endeavoured to conceive aright the nature of the eternal life of the saints. It was evident to us, that no carnal delights deserved to be named on this subject; erecting our spirits more ardently, we ascended above the noblest parts of the material creation to the consideration of our own minds, and passing above them, we attempted to reach heaven itself, to come to thee, by whom all things were made. There our hearts were enamoured, and there we held fast the first fruits of the Spirit, and returned to the sound of our own voice, which gave us an emblem of the Divine Word. We said, if the flesh, the imagination, and every tongue should be silenced, for they proclaim, WE MADE NOT OURSELVES, BUT HE WHO REMAINETH FOR EVER: If these things should now hold their peace, and God alone should speak, not by any emblems or created things, but by himself, so that we could hear his Word; should this be continued, and other visions be withdrawn and this alone seize and absorb the spectator for ever, is not this the meaning of, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"* At that moment the world appeared to [c. 10.]

* Matt. xxv. In Rev. xxi. 23. the same sublime thought is described under the medium of sight, which here is conveyed under the medium of hearing.

us of no value: and she said, Son, I have now no delight in life. What I should do here, and why I am here, I know not, the hope of this life being quite spent. One thing only, your conversion, was an object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this in larger measure.

[c. 11] What do I here?—Scarcely five days after, she fell into a fever. A brother of mine, who was with us, lamented that she was likely to die in a foreign land. She looked at him with anxiety, to see him so grovelling in his conceptions, and then looking at me, said, "Place this body any where: do not distress yourselves concerning it." I could not but rejoice, and give thee thanks, that she was delivered from that anxiety, with which I knew she always had been agitated in regard to a sepulchre, which she had provided for herself, and prepared near the body of her husband. I knew not the time when this void had been filled by the fulness of thy grace, but I rejoiced to find this evidence of it. I heard afterwards, that while we were at Ostia she had discoursed with some friends, in my absence, concerning the contempt of life, and they, expressing their surprise that she did not fear to leave her body so far from her own country; "Nothing," said she, "is far to God, and I do not fear that he should not know where to find me at the resurrection." She departed this life on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine.*

BOOK X.

Now, Lord, my groaning testifies that I am displeased with myself; but thou art light and pleasure, and art loved and desired, that I may blush for myself, and renounce myself, and choose thee: and neither attempt to please thee, nor myself, but by depending on thee. For when I am wicked, then to confess to thee is no other thing than to be displeased with myself; and when godly, this is nothing else, but to confess that thou affordest that gift to me.

[c. 2]

* In what follows to the end of this Book, the Author gives a very amiable picture of the filial affections, tempered by piety and resignation, which he felt on this occasion, not indeed without a mixture of the superstition of praying for the dead, which was growing in this century. In him the evangelical spirit, however, predominates extremely, even while he is indulging the superstitious. But let it suffice to have given this general account.

The confessions of my past evils, which thou hast forgiven, changing my mind by faith and thy baptism, when they are read and heard, excite the heart, that it sink not in despair, but may watch in the love of thy mercy, and the sweetness of thy grace, by which the weak, brought to feel his own weakness, is made strong. But what advantage will result from my confessing, as I now propose, not what I was, but what I now am? I will discover myself to such as will rejoice over me for what is good, and will pray for and sympathize with me in regard to what is evil, more secure as I am through thy mercy, than my innocence. I am a little child, but my Father always lives, and is my sufficient guardian. What temptations I can or cannot resist, I know not. But my hope is this, that thou art faithful that thou dost not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the temptation also makest a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.* Lord, I love thee; thou hast smitten my heart with thy Word, and I have loved thee. But what do I love, when I love thee? not the heavens and the earth, nor any created beauty. They cry aloud, we are not God, he made us. Where shall I find thee, but in thyself, above me? Too late did I love thee, thou PRIMÆVAL Beauty! Thou calledst aloud, and overcamedst my deafness: thou shonest, and dispelledst my darkness. Thou wast fragrant, and I panted after thee. I tasted, and hungered and thirsted after thee: thou touchedst me, and I was inflamed into thy peace. When I shall stick wholly to thee, I shall no more have pain and fatigue, and my whole life shall live full of thee. But now, because thou supportest him whom thou fillest, because I am not full of thee, I am a burden to myself. My wholesome griefs and pernicious pleasures contend together, and I know not on which side the victory stands. Woe is me! Thou art my physician, I am sick. Thou art merciful, I am wretched. All my hope lies in thy immense mercy. Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. Thou commandest us to keep from the lust of the flesh, from the lust of the eyes, and from the pride

[c. 3 & 4.] [c. 5.] [c. 6.] [c. 27.] [c. 28.] [c. 29 & 30]

* 1 Cor. x. 13.

of life: and what thou commandest, thou hast given me. Yet there still live in my memory the images of evil, to which I had been habituated, and they occur to me even in sleep. Is not thy hand, O God, able to heal all the diseases of my soul, and to sanctify even the hours of rest? I would rejoice with trembling in what thou hast given me, and mourn over that which is imperfect, and hope that thou wilt perfect thy mercies, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

[c. 31.] There is another evil of the day, and I wish the day may be sufficient for it. We refresh the continual ruins of the body by food, till this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Thou hast taught me to use food as medicine. But while I am passing from the uneasiness of hunger to the rest of satiety; in the very passage the snare of concupiscence is laid for me; and the bounds of innocence are not easily defined, and a pretence for indulgence is made on that very account. These temptations I daily endeavour to resist, and I call on thy right hand for my salvation, and make known to thee my agitations of soul, because I am not yet clear on this subject. I hear my God, saying "let not your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness."* The latter is far from me, let it not approach me; the former sometimes steals upon me, keep it at a distance from me. Who is there, Lord, that is perfectly temperate? Whoever he be, let him magnify thy name. But I am not he, I am a sinful man. However, I magnify thy name, and He who overcame the world, and numbers me among the weak members of his body, intercedes for my sins.

[c. 32.] In regard to the enticement of smells, I am not solicitous. When they are absent, I want them not; when present, I do not refuse them, content to be without them entirely. So I think; but such is my miserable darkness, that I must not easily credit myself, because, what is within, generally lies hid, till experience evidence it. The only hope, the only confidence, the only firm promise, is thy mercy.

[c. 33.] The pleasures of the ear have deeper hold on me. I find, even while I am charmed with sacred melody, I am led astray at times by the luxury of sensations,

* Luke xxi. 34.

and offend, not knowing at the time, but afterwards I discover it. Sometimes, guarding against this fallacy, I err in the other extreme, and could wish all the melody of David's Psalms were removed from my ears, and those of the church, and think it safer to imitate the plan of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who directed a method of repeating the psalms more resembling pronunciation than music. But when I remember my tears of affection at my conversion under the melody of thy church, with which I am still affected, I again acknowledge the utility of the custom. Thus do I fluctuate between the danger of pleasure, and the experience of utility, and am induced, though with a wavering assent, to own that the infirmity of nature may be assisted in devotion by psalmody. Yet when the tune has moved me more than the subject, I feel guilty, and am ready to wish I had not heard the music. See where I am, and mourn with me, ye who are conscious of any inward feelings of godliness. I cannot expect the sympathy of those who are not. Thou, Lord, my God, hear and pity and heal me.

[c. 34.] The pleasures of the eye I find to entangle me from time to time. But thou deliverest me, sometimes without pain, because I fall into them gently; at other times with pain, because I stick in them.

[c. 35.] Another form of manifold danger is added, a curious spirit, palliated by the name of knowledge. Surrounded as we are with objects, when can I say I am freed from this? What vehement temptations have I had from the enemy, to ask of thee a sign: But I beseech thee by our king, Jesus Christ, that, as I am far from consenting to it, so I may be farther and farther. What a trifle diverts me from a thought of great importance, and unless thou quickly admonish me by the conviction of my infirmity, either to divert the thought by some serious meditation, or to despise it altogether, I should become absolutely dull. My life is full of these evils, and even my prayers are often disturbed, and while I apply my heart to thine ears, I am overborne by a torrent of vanities.

[c. 36.] What can give hope, except thy mercy, by which thou hast begun to renew us? And thou knowest how much thou hast done for me already.—I carry thy yoke, and find it easy, as thou hast promised. It

always was so, but I did not believe it, when I was afraid to take it upon me; but thou, O Lord, thou who alone rulest without pride, because thou hast no superior, can I in this life be exempt from pride? "Well done, well done!" I find scattered in the nets by the enemy every where.

[c. 37.] Daily, Lord, we feel these temptations. Thou knowest, on this head, the groans of my heart, and the floods of mine eyes. Nor can I easily see, that I grow more free from this pest of pride; and I much fear my secret evils, which thou knowest.—I am poor and needy, and my best method is to seek thy mercy in secret groans and in self-abhorrence, till thou perfect that which concerneth me.

There is another internal evil, by which a man, without

[c. 39.] seeking to please others, pleases himself with thy good things, as if they were his own; or if he allows them to be thine, yet he is apt to fancy them bestowed upon him for his own merits; or he pleases himself with indulging an invidious spirit against others. In all these dangers thou seest the trembling of my heart; I feel my wounds healed every now and then by thee; but I feel

[c. 40.] not an exemption from them. Sometimes thou introducest me into an uncommon affection, into a sweetness past the power of description, which, were it perfected in me, I should not see what life would want to complete its felicity. But I sink back by the weight of misery, and am held entangled.

Whom shall I look to as my mediator? Shall I go to

[c. 42.] angels? Many have tried this, and have been fond of visions, and have deserved to be the sport of the illusions which they loved. A mediator between God and man must have the nature of both.—The true Mediator, whom in thy secret mercy thou hast

[c. 43.] shown to the humble, and hast sent, that by his example they might also learn humility, the man Christ Jesus, hath appeared a mediator between mortal sinners, and the immortal Holy One, that, because the wages of righteousness is life and peace, by his divine righteousness he might justify the ungodly, and deliver them from death. He was shown to ancient saints, that they might be saved by faith in his future sufferings, as we

by faith in the same sufferings already past. How hast thou loved us, Father, delivering up thy only Son for us ungodly! For whom he, our priest and sacrifice, who thought it no robbery to be equal with thee, was subjected to death. Well may my hope be strong through such an intercessor; else, I should despair. Many and great are my diseases, thy medicine larger still. Were he not made flesh for us, we could not dream of having any union with him. Terrified with my sins and the weight of my misery, I was desponding, but thou encouragedst me, saying, Christ died for all, that they which live, should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them.* Lo, I cast all my care on thee, Lord, that I may live. Thou knowest my weakness and ignorance, teach and heal me. He hath redeemed me with his blood, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Let not the proud calumniate me, if with the poor I desire to eat and be satisfied, and to praise the Lord.†

Augustine, after his conversion, returned with some friends into Africa, and lived upon his own estate for almost three years, retired from the world. A desire to oblige a person of some consequence in Hippo, who requested his instructions, brought him at length to that city, where Valerius was bishop,—a person of great piety; but, on account of his slender acquaintance with the Latin tongue, scarcely adequate to the office of pastor in that place. Augustine, through the strong and urgent desires of the people, was ordained presbyter to Valerius; but wept on the occasion, from the genuine sense which he had of the importance of the office. He told Possidius that his tears were by some misconstrued,‡ as if he regretted that he had not been chosen bishop. Such poor judges are

* 2 Cor. v. 15.

† Psalm xxii. 26. We see in this last book the author's description of the conflict between flesh and spirit after his conversion, and the repose of his soul for peace and happiness only on the Lord Jesus as his righteousness and strength. I shall make no further remarks than to repeat his own observation in his retractations. "These confessions praise the God of righteousness and goodness, and excite the human understanding and affection toward him. They did this in me while I was writing them, and they do it still when I read them. What others may think of them, let them judge; but I know they have much pleased and do please many of the brethren." [Lib. ii. c. 6.]

‡ Possid. Life of Aug.

many, of the views and sensations of godly men! Valerius rejoiced that God had heard his prayers, and that the people would now be supplied with such a pastor. He gave him licence to preach in the presence of the bishop, a thing before unknown in Africa; but which, from the good effects of this precedent, afterwards grew common. Here his ministry was useful in the instruction and edification of the brethren, and also in the defeat of various heresies. Divine truth, which had been almost buried amidst many schisms and distractions in Africa, now raised up its head again; and Fortunatus, the great leader of the Manichees, was obliged, in confusion, to leave Hippo, when he found himself, by the confession of the hearers, vanquished in a conference with Augustine.

Heretics vied with the members of the general church in their attention to the pastoral labours of Augustine, whose fame began gradually to spread throughout the Western world. Valerius rejoiced and gave thanks on the account, and being solicitous to preserve such a treasure to his church, he took care to get Augustine elected bishop of Hippo, in conjunction with himself. Age and infirmities rendered Valerius very inadequate to the work; and every true Christian will doubt which more to admire, the godly zeal of Augustine, tempered with modesty and charity, or the unfeigned humility of Valerius. Augustine, after he had strongly resisted the inclinations of the bishop and all the church, at length accepted the office; the duties of which he continued to discharge after the decease of Valerius. His zeal and laboriousness increased with his authority. The monastery of his institution became renowned in Africa; and about ten bishops of undoubted piety, known to our author,* came from this seminary. These instituted monasteries after the same pattern, and from them other churches were supplied with pastors; and the doctrines of faith, hope and charity, by these means, and also by Augustine's writings, which were translated into the Greek tongue, were diffused and enforced with increasing vigour through the Christian world. His writings, however, never seem to have had any permanent influence in the Eastern church.

* Possid. c. 11.

CHAP. III.

THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

It is the part of an intelligent agent to choose the fittest season for the execution of arduous enterprises, or the introduction of important innovations. This rule, we may safely conclude, is observed by Satan in all his attempts against the Church of Christ. While the belief and experience of divine influences were strong and vigorous in Christian societies, it was in vain for him to attempt to persuade men, that such influences were of no necessity or value: he could do no more than seduce them to counterfeit, abuse, or misapply them. Hence the wildness and incoherence of Montanism. But now that the holy influence of the Spirit of God was generally damped by superstition, or quenched by licentiousness, Satan felt himself emboldened to erect a new heresy, which should pretend to the height of purity, supported by MERE HUMAN NATURE, exclusive of the operations of divine grace altogether. This was Pelagianism:* and as this evil now entered the Church for the first time, and in a greater or less degree has continued to this day; as it is directly subversive of Christianity, and as it introduced a controversy, not trivial and frivolous like many others, but of unspeakable importance, it eminently falls within the plan of this History, to state the circumstances and consequences with perspicuity.

Augustine, of Hippo, had been trained up under the Lord's wholesome discipline, by an extraordinary conversion, as we have seen, during the latter part of the last century. Thus did the all-wise God, who IS WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL AND EXCELLENT IN WORK, secretly STIR UP A SCOURGE for Pelagius, against the time that he should make his appearance; and his heresy was eventually one of the grand means of introducing juster views of Gospel grace, than had for a long time obtained in the Church, and of reviving Christian truth, humility and piety. The effects of this effusion of the Spirit were solid, though never brilliant, operative during this century and many centuries

* In this chapter I purpose to describe its rise and progress historically. What I have said of its precise nature, will be confirmed in the proper place by the authentic lights of antiquity.

afterwards, in the production of much real godliness in the minds of many individuals, particularly of monastic persons, to whom, for ages, Augustine's writings were a great and useful light; indeed, next to the word of God, the greatest means of grace which they had in times extremely unfavourable to improvement. Hence, besides the immediate benefit which the Church received in his own time, the utility of this providential dispensation reached to the time of the Reformation itself, and even beyond it in Popish countries; though the reader must not expect any great or strong display of the plantation of new churches, or any sudden and marvellous change in the external appearance of the Church. The light we are now to contemplate never broke out into a vivid extensive flame, but shone with faint, though steady rays, with a moderate degree of brightness at first, and afterwards glimmered through many ages.

Pelagius was born in Britain, and was in his own time called Brito.* His companion Cœlestius was an Irishman, by the testimony of Jerom. He calls him a Scot, and that name in those times meant, as is known to the learned, a native of Ireland. They were both laymen; the former, by profession, a monk, who, as far as appears, always maintained a character of fair and decent morals. In the heat of contention there were who denied this; but it is admitted by Augustine with his usual candour, and we might have been certain of it, independently of his authority; because otherwise it would have been impossible for him ever to have become a person of lasting reputation in the religious world. He travelled from monastery to monastery, through various parts of the Empire. His heretical opinions did not appear till he was far advanced in life;

* I make large use of Jansenius in this narrative: he has prefixed the history of the heresy to his treatise called Augustine: The accounts seem accurate, and well supported by authorities of contemporary writers, particularly Jerome and Augustine. I have consulted these two with much care and attention, and I find Jansenius so exact and well-informed in those things of which we have an opportunity to form an estimate, that it seems reasonable to give him credit for his extracts from the Gesta Pelag. of Aug.—a work which we have not in the common editions of that Father, because it was not discovered till about the time of Jansenius, being found, as he tells us, in an Abbey at Fesulæ, in Italy.

Since I wrote this, I have seen the Gesta Pelag. in a more recent edition of Augustine, and am still further confirmed in my opinion of the accurate industry of Jansenius.

before that time Augustine owns (though he speaks by hearsay) his reputation for serious piety to have been great in the Christian world; and those who know the difference between holiness and mere morality will not be surprised at this. Augustine allows the genius and capacity of both these men to have been of the first order: and this testimony from him is decisive with me against that of Jerome, who treats the understanding and endowments of both with great contempt; but Jerome was not apt to allow any laudable qualities to an ADVERSARY.

Isidore of Pelusium applies to Pelagius that passage of Hosea; "grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not." This author is understood thence to intimate, that he fell into this heresy in old age. It began to appear about the year 404 or 5. Chrysostom writing to his friend, the deaconess Olympias, says,* "I am much grieved for Pelagius the monk; consider what crowns must be reserved for those who stand firm, when men who have lived in so much mortification and continency, appear to be so carried away." His first writings were an epistle to Paulinus of Nola and other little works, in which his erroneous views of grace were so artfully expressed, and so guarded with cautious terms, that Augustine owns he was almost deceived by them. But when he saw his other writings of a later date, he discerned that he might artfully own the word GRACE, and by retaining the term, break the force of prejudice, and avoid offence, and yet conceal his meaning under a general ambiguity.

Pelagianism appears about A.D. 404. or 405.

For, by a dexterity very common with heretics, Pelagius, while he laid open to his converts the whole mystery of his doctrine, imparted only so much to others as might be more calculated to ensnare their affections than to inform them of his real opinions. He used to deliver his views under the modest appearance of queries, started against the doctrines of the church, and those as not invented by himself, but by others. The effect of poisoning the minds of men was, perhaps, more powerfully produced by this, than it would have been by a more direct and positive method. To this he added another artifice: he insinuated himself into the favour of women of some rank, of weak minds, and

* [Ep. 16. Op. Chrysost. tom. 7. p. 103.]

unacquainted with the spirit of the Gospel, though professing religion: and, by their means, he diffused his tenets with much success. Cœlestius, more open and daring in speech, pursued a method not so replete with deceit, and was therefore exposed to detection more easily than his master.

Pelagius, having travelled over the monasteries of Egypt, settled at length at Rome, where his attempts to undermine the whole doctrine of divine grace, by degrees, notwithstanding all his caution, gave umbrage to the Church. Unguarded moments also will happen to the most artful, and at times discover them to the most unwary. A bishop, who was a colleague of Augustine, mentioning to Pelagius those words of the Confessions, "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt;" he contradicted with great vehemence, and expressed much indignation at the sentiment.

Rome taken and plundered by the Goths, A. D. 410.

Rome being taken by the Goths about the year 410, numbers fled into Africa, and among the rest the two heresiarchs. Pelagius was received at Hippo, in Augustine's absence, where his stay was very short. The bishop of Hippo saw him once or twice at Carthage; but was himself very busy in settling a conference with the Donatists, and nothing material passed between them. Pelagius, leaving Africa, passed over into Palestine: there his labours attracted the attention of Jerome, who lived a monastic life in the same country, and wrote against his opinions, justly calling on him to speak clearly what he meant, and complaining of his ambiguities.

Pelagius spreads his errors in Palestine.

In the mean time Cœlestius in Africa more openly discovered his sentiments, and made such attempts to propagate them in Carthage itself, that he was summoned to appear before a synod, which was held by Aurelius, bishop of that city. He was accused of denying original sin; and when he was pressed with the custom of the Church in baptizing infants, as a proof of her belief in all ages that infants needed redemption, he declared that they had no need of remission, and yet ought to be baptized, that they might be sanctified in Christ. Cœlestius was condemned as a heretic in the year 412, and disappointed of his hopes of rising in the church; for he had either obtained or was about to obtain, the office of a presbyter, in Africa.

Cœlestius in Africa.

Cœlestius is condemned at Carthage as a heretic, A. D. 412.

A fragment of the acts of this synod is preserved by Augustine,* though he himself was not present at it, in which is the following passage: "Aurelius said, Read what follows, and it was read: That the sin of Adam hurt himself alone, and not mankind. Cœlestius said, I owned that I was dubious concerning the communication of sin by descent from Adam (yet in such a manner, that I shall bow to the authority of those to whom God hath given the grace of superior skill;) because I have heard different things from those who at least were presbyters in the church. Paulinus, a deacon, said, Name them. Cœlestius answered, The holy presbyter † Ruffinus at Rome: I heard him deny any communication of sin by descent. Being pressed, if he could name any more, he said, Is not one priest sufficient? On being asked, whether he had not asserted, that infants are born in a state in which Adam was before transgression, all that could be obtained from him was, That infants needed baptism, and ought to be baptized." ‡

Indeed Pelagianism itself seemed little more than a revival of Deism, or what is commonly called natural religion. Adam, it was said, would have died, whether he sinned or not. Men might be saved by the Law, as well as the Gospel: infants just born are in the same state as Adam before transgression. Men's death depends not on that of Adam, nor does their resurrection depend on that of Christ. These tenets were objected to Cœlestius, and condemned. In a book which he offered to the council, he owned that children were redeemed by Christ, and yet he would not confess that the effects of Adam's sin passed upon them. So inconsistent are men, bent on the support of error, and yet willing to appear in some measure Christian!

In the mean time Pelagius, in his manner, was still writ-

* In his book on Original Sin, cap. 3.

† This is he, who was famous for his controversy with Jerome, and for the translation of Origen's works, and of whom, though he seems to be not much in the line of our history, we shall have occasion to say a little more hereafter.

‡ Two plain inferences seem deducible from this fragment; 1. That the right of baptizing infants was allowed on all sides to have been of apostolical and primitive authority. It is impossible that men so shrewd and learned as Cœlestius and his master, would not have objected to the novelty of infant-baptism, had it been a novelty. 2. The belief of original sin had universally obtained, and must have been equally apostolical. One presbyter only was named by Cœlestius, as favouring the doctrine of Pelagius.

ing against the doctrines of the Gospel; while Augustine, than whom no man was ever more cautious and deliberate in the whole controversy, answered in his writings the evil tendency of the Pelagian tenets, "avoiding," says he,* "the name of Pelagius, thinking that I might more easily profit him, if, preserving friendship, I should yet spare his modesty." But more of this hereafter.

Cœlestius, driven from Africa, fixed his seat in Sicily, and by the questions which he there excited, gave occasion to Augustine to employ his pen in answering him. Nor did the heresy cease in Africa: the bishop of Hippo was employed not only in writing, but also in preaching against the new notions, and gave his testimony in a solemn manner from the pulpit at Carthage.

Pelagius himself wrote in the most respectful manner to Augustine, and in the highest terms extolled his character. It is certain, that the impressions made on Augustine's mind in favour of Pelagius were strong, and not easily erased, because he had been taught to believe him to be a person of great virtue. Nothing but the completest evidence of heresy could have induced him to make an open rupture. And a soul like his, humble and charitable in a high degree, would, I doubt not, long entertain the best hopes of a man whom he had once esteemed. In this spirit he wrote to him the following guarded letter:

"I thank you for your kind letter.† The Lord requite you good, by which you may be ever good, and live with the Eternal for ever. Though I cannot own the good things in myself, which your friendly Epistle mentions, yet I should be ungrateful did I not thank you: at the same time admonishing you rather to pray for me, that I may become such, from the Lord, as you think me to be."

In the year 413 an occasion was offered to Pelagius of discovering himself more openly to the world. A virgin, named Demetrias, of the illustrious race of the Anicii, one of the most antient and noble families of Rome, having fled into Africa on account of the invasion of the Goths, was, by the exhortation of Augustine, induced to consecrate

Pelagius's Letter to a Virgin named Demetrias, A. D. 413.

* Lib. de Gestis Pelag. [Vid Retractat. Lib. ii. c. 33.]
† [Lib. de Gestis Pelag. c. 28.]

her virginity to God. The piety of the action was extolled in these superstitious days by all the Christian world, and the bishop of Hippo joined with others in congratulating her. For sufficient proof has already appeared, that he escaped not the infection of the age, though he mixed with it as much real humility as most persons of those times. Pelagius wrote to her a long and extremely elegant letter, exhorting her to seek true perfection, in which he plainly directs her to look to nature, not to grace, for strength: yet it is written with so much artifice, that in his apology afterwards to Innocent, bishop of Rome, he appeals to it as a justification of his orthodoxy.* Augustine, some years after, wrote a refutation of it, addressed to Juliana, the mother of Demetrias. Pelagius wrote also another letter to a certain widow, full of the same adulatory strains, in which he so grossly discovers himself, that, as will shortly appear, he had no way left but to disown it.

In the year 415, or nearly so, two well-disposed young men, Timasius and Jacob, meeting with Pelagius, were by him induced to enter on the monastic life, in the commendation of which all parties were but too strongly agreed. But they imbibed also his self-righteous doctrine, from which, however, by the labours of Augustine, they were afterwards delivered. On this occasion, they showed Augustine a book of Pelagius, in which he vehemently accused those who pleaded the faultiness of human nature as an excuse for their sins, and in which, while he seemed to be only inveighing against a licentious abuse of Gospel grace, he evidently denied the existence of all grace, and maintained, that by that term were to be understood the natural endowments of the human mind, SEASONED and directed by free-will; and these endowments, so seasoned and directed, he acknowledged to be the free gifts of God. The bishop of Hippo, with extreme reluctance, at length admitted the full conviction of the heretical character of Pelagius, and answered the book; yet he concealed his name, lest Pelagius, being offended, might become still more incurable. Augustine owns that he afterwards repented of this step, because he had proba-

Timasius and Jacob. A.D. 415.

* A farther view of this letter shall be given hereafter, among what may be called the PELAGIAN PAPERS.

bly increased the pride of the heretic, through an ill-judged fear of giving him pain.

For Pelagius, hearing of Augustine's proceedings, loudly complained, that some of his books had been stolen from him; and others reckoned as his, which were not so. It is difficult to deal with deceitful men; yet the African bishop used the most prudent method. He sent his own book and Pelagius's together to Innocent, of Rome, desiring him to mark the sentiments of each, "and if he denies that these are his sentiments, I contend not; let him anathematize them, and in plain terms confess the doctrine of Christian grace. I have, says he, sufficient witnesses, men who have a great regard for him, who will attest that I had the book from them, and that it has not been falsified by me." Innocent, in reply, condemned the book altogether, as containing horrible sentiments, hitherto unprecedented in the Christian world. How much more reputable would it be to the characters of many, like Pelagius, would they at once own what they are, and make no pretensions to the doctrines of Grace! But this sincerity would not so effectually serve the cause of Satan in the world.

While Jerome in the East, and Augustine in the West, were opposing Pelagianism, the heresiarch himself was summoned to appear in the latter end of the same year, 415, before a synod of fourteen bishops of Palestine, at Lydda, then called Diospolis. Here he had every advantage, which an accused person could wish for. His two accusers, Heros and Lazarus, bishops of Gaul, were absent, because one of them was sick at that time. The court were poorly acquainted with the Latin tongue, in which the works of Pelagius were written, and John of Jerusalem, one of the principal bishops, was prejudiced in favour of Origenism, and of Pelagius. The Eastern church itself was more corrupt in doctrine, and more inclined to support innovations than the Western: and the heresiarch himself, in capacity, presence of mind, and circumspection, far exceeded all his judges.

Pelagius summoned before the Synod of Diospolis.

Yet the letter to the widow above-mentioned was so fulsome, and so replete with self-righteous doctrine, that he found it necessary to deny, that he had written the things imputed to him. He had described her as the only righte-

ous person upon earth, with whom piety found a refuge, when it could find none elsewhere; and he taught her to pray in this form: "Thou knowest, Lord, how holy, innocent, and clean these hands are which I extend to thee; how just and clean these lips, and free from all guile, with which I pray for thy mercy." In no part of his conduct did he lay himself more open to censure. He preached a perfection, attainable in this life, a perfection too, drawn altogether from nature. However, by denying this charge, and by dextrously evading and explaining away all the rest,* he obtained an honourable acquittal. If there was any fault at all in the conduct of Augustine toward this man, it was a fault indeed of the most amiable kind, an excess of tenderness and lenity. Pelagius knew how to take advantage of it, and produced to the court the short letter of the bishop of Hippo to him, which has been given above.

Pelagius defended by the bishop of Jerusalem.

John, bishop of Jerusalem, defended Pelagius in the synod with great earnestness, and he was at last received as a Christian brother. Flushed with his victory, he prepared to improve the advantage which it gave him. Though he was acquitted, as holding the doctrines of grace, and not as inimical to them, he wrote to a friend, that fourteen bishops had agreed with him, that man might be without sin, and easily keep the commands of God, if he would; concealing at the same time his confession of the necessity of divine grace, by which he had eluded condemnation. With similar artifice, he transmitted an account to Augustine of his acquittal. He wrote also four books on free-will, in which he openly took away original sin, and gloried at the same time in the acts of the synod in Palestine. And his partisans, being incensed against Jerome and the Roman ladies, who lived in monasteries under his direction in Palestine, made a scandalous assault upon them, of which Jerome complained to Innocent of Rome, who afterwards expostulated † with John, bishop of Jerusalem, for conniving at the burnings and plunderings of which the Pelagians had been guilty. Augustine also wrote ‡ to John in a mild but firm tone, to undeceive him concerning the real doctrines of Pelagius, and sent

* Gest. Pelag. The recital of the particulars would be tedious and uninstructive.

† [Innocent. Ep. 32. ad Joann.]

‡ [Augustin. Ep. 179.]

him both his own treatise on Nature and Grace and that of Pelagius; and receiving afterwards the acts of the synod of Diospolis, he published the history of Pelagianism, from which we have taken many of the foregoing particulars.

A council being held the next year at Carthage, on various exigencies of the Church, Orosius, returning from Palestine, brought them the letters of Heros and Lazarus against Pelagius. * Though the acts of the Eastern council had not yet reached this African synod, yet they had now sufficient information to alarm their minds. The council wrote to Innocent of Rome their plain sense of the controversy, which was—that unless Pelagius and his partisans, in express terms rejected the sentiments ascribed to him, they should be excommunicated, to prevent others from being imposed on by false pretensions.† These equitable determinations were signed by sixty-nine bishops. Another synod‡ of Numidian bishops, assembled at Milevi, wrote also to Rome to the same effect. Augustine § also, his friend Alypius, now bishop of Tagasta, Aurelius of Carthage, and two other bishops, wrote letters in their own names to Innocent, more distinctly explaining the subject, and showing how the Eastern council most probably had been imposed on by the subtilty of Pelagius; at the same time intimating their fear, lest Rome itself, where he had long lived, should be infected with the heresy. Innocent, ‖ in his answer, entered fully into the views of the Africans, and in the same conditional manner condemned the authors of the heresy. As it however still spread in a secret manner, it needed to be extirpated by argument. For this the bishop of Hippo was peculiarly qualified. And for more than twenty years he was employed in writing and preaching against the heresy.

Council of Carthage.

* [Augustin. Ep. 175.]

† I wonder not that the advocates for the papacy have argued from these frequent appeals to Rome, for the infallibility and dominion of the Pope. But the truth is, nothing could be farther from the thoughts of the Africans. We shall see shortly that they withstand and correct the errors of a Roman bishop; nor have I seen any thing in Augustine's voluminous writings that indicates such a subjection. The word of God was as yet allowed to be the great standard of doctrine; and the frequent correspondence with Rome arose from the importance of the situation of that church as fixed in the metropolis of the Empire, and as being the centre of intelligence to the Christian world.

‡ [Augustin. Ep. 176.]

§ [Augustin. Ep. 177.]

‖ [Innocent. Ep. 181, 182, 183.]

The two heresiarchs now endeavoured to elude the force of the decrees against them. Cœlestius, who had been in Asia for some time, and had obtained the office of presbyter, visited Rome in the year 417. He applied to Zozimus, the successor of Innocent, and recited his libel before him.* And here, with an unlimited degree of complaisance, he submitted his sentiments implicitly to the Bishop of Rome, professing a desire to be corrected by him, if as a man he erred in any point, and complained of the precipitation with which he had been condemned.

Cœlestius comes to Rome, A.D. 417.

Zozimus,† deceived by his artifices, wrote to the African prelates, complaining of the malice of the Gaulish bishops, and declaring, that unless within two months he heard more decisive proofs against Cœlestius, he should consider him as a Christian brother. The African bishops, in reply, complained of the precipitation of Zozimus, and at length sent to Rome such complete proofs against Cœlestius, that he withdrew himself from the examination, and avoided the means of a public detection. Zozimus however still delayed his condemnation, for which he is justly blamed by Augustine.‡

Pelagius, using the same methods which Cœlestius did, wrote to Innocent, with whose death he was unacquainted. Some fragments of his letters are preserved by Augustine.§ A sample of them is as follows: "Lo, let this epistle clear me before you, in which I say that we have a free-will to sin and not to sin, which in all good works is always helped by divine aid." And "this power we say is in all in general, in Christians, Jews, and Gentiles. In all there is free-will equally by nature, but in Christians alone it is helped by grace. In others there is a good condition, naked and unarmed; in those who belong to Christ, it is fortified by his assistance. Persons therefore are to be condemned, who, when they have free-will, by which they might come to faith, and obtain the grace of God, abuse their liberty: but those are to be rewarded, who, using free-will aright, obtain the favour of God, and keep his

* [Libell. fid. Pelag. inter Augustin. Opera.]
† [Ep. Zosim. ad African. inter Op. August. in Mon. ad Pelag. hist. pertinent.]
‡ B. 2. to Bonif. c. 3 § [Vid. Præfat. in tom. 13. c. 15. Op. Augustin.]

commands." He adds more to the same purpose, never once either admitting the doctrine of original sin, or defining what he means by divine assistance, which with him may mean no more than the benefit of external revelation, or the preservation of our natural powers. Had he once expressly declared, that he did not believe any real influence of divine grace on the mind, inclining it to what is good, which he knew the Christian world before his time believed, and which if he himself had believed, he would have expressed; there would have been an honesty in his heretical pravity, which would have entitled his character to a greater degree of respect. As the case stands, and, as he must have known that his opponent used the terms grace and divine assistance in a quite different sense from that in which he used them, he appears by his own words to have been an insincere disputant. He sent also to Rome a symbol of his faith, written in the same style of ambiguity, and attended with the same adulatory strains to the bishop of Rome, which Cœlestius had used on the like occasion.

Zozimus, to whom his letters came, was imposed on by them, as he had been by those of Cœlestius; and he wrote to the African bishops, that he was convinced, that Pelagius was innocent. The latter answered him very properly,* that it was not sufficient for Pelagius and Cœlestius to own in general that they approved of all that he approved of; that it behoved them expressly to confess, that we need the grace of Jesus Christ, not only to know, but also to do righteousness in every act. Thus they showed that they had, what Zozimus had not, a clear and accurate conception of the subject. But they had Augustine among them: whereas men, whose consciences have had little exercise on these subjects, are seldom quick in comprehending them, nay, are apt to be imposed on by plausible terms, though they be in other respects men of enlarged and cultivated understandings.

Zozimus was, however, open to conviction; for the bishops of Rome had not yet learned to be INFALLIBLE. The instructions of Augustine corrected his mistakes, and being further acquainted with the subject by some writings of Pelagius, which were brought to him at Rome, he openly condemned the two heretics. Whether he had done so or

* [Ibid. c. 18.]

not, there is not the slightest ground to believe, that the African bishops and churches would not have persevered, by their own authority, in rejecting Pelagianism: but the concurrence of the bishop of Rome was doubtless of great service to the general cause of Christian truth at this period. It has often been said, that men called heretics have not the advantage of being heard, because their writings are not extant. I have therefore been solicitous to furnish the reader with all the light which can be obtained on that side of the question. Notwithstanding the scantiness of materials, Arius I think was sufficiently proved guilty from his own mouth, and so was Pelagius; but of the latter we have much larger remains. On this occasion it will be proper to mention a passage from his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, quoted by Zozimus, as it shows at the same time the strength of his prejudices and the shrewdness of his understanding. "If Adam's sin hurt those who were not guilty, the righteousness of Christ profits those who believe not." *

The Pelagians bitterly censured Sixtus, a presbyter of Rome, afterwards bishop, for being active in condemning those whom before he had patronized. Augustine exposed their unreasonableness in reviling that very lenity and caution which had been so slow to condemn, till the fullest evidence was obtained, and admonished Sixtus not to be content with anathematizing Pelagius, but to be also laborious in warning and teaching the people.†

The Emperor Honorius ‡ also passed the sentence of banishment from Rome on the Pelagians the same year in which their doctrines were condemned, that is, the year 418. Cœlestius retired to Constantinople, where his tenets were opposed by Atticus the bishop, and his views of propagating them were disappointed. The party were, however, indefatigable; letters were written to the bishop of Thessalonica, in which they professed their desire to defend the Catholic faith against the heresy of the Manichees, and in that specious manner they vindicated their praises of the powers of human nature. Augustine answered their arguments, which had

Pelagians banished by Honorius, A.D. 418.

* [Augustin. de Peccat. Original. l. ii. c. 21. s. 24.]

† [Augustin. Ep. 191, and 194.]

‡ [Varia scripta ad Pelag. hist. pertinent. in August. op. tom. 17. p. 2720.]

been sent by eighteen of the party to Thessalonica;* Aticus also wrote against them to Rome, and the sect underwent a general condemnation.

Pelagius, who was still in Palestine, complained of the treatment which he had received, and being interrogated there concerning the disputed points by some persons of respectable characters, he answered with such subtle ambiguity, that he again imposed on his examiners, who explained to Augustine in writing the result. The latter, roused by repeated acts of dissimulation, wrote his treatise on Original Sin and the Grace of Christ, in which he detected and exposed the artifices of Pelagius. The wiles of the party were not yet exhausted: they charged the general Church with condemning marriage, and the workmanship of God in the creation of man; I suppose maliciously deducing those consequences from the doctrine of original sin: and this drew another reply from the argumentative pen of Augustine.†

One Julian, a young person of great spirit and self-confidence, now arose in defence of Pelagianism, and wrote with great vehemence and asperity, and in a very voluminous manner. He described himself as the little David, who was to fight against the Goliah of Hippo, and declared that it was proper to decide the contest by a single combat, while the rest of the church should be in peace. I love to lay open to the reader all along the connexion between principle and practice: and, if I show not the indisputable superiority of the orthodox Christians, in disposition and temper, I miss one of the most important points, which I have in view through the whole history. Indeed the strength and excellence of Augustine's cause lies in its tendency to promote humility, while the weakness and turpitude of the Pelagian cause lies in supporting the spirit of pride. How can this be shown better than by proving from facts, that the Pelagians were proud men, and that those who sincerely embraced the doctrines of grace were humble. To the boasting language of Julian, Augustine modestly replied, "Who promised you a single combat on my side? Where, when, how, who were present, who the arbiters? Far be it from me to assume to my-

* B. 2 c. 1. to Boniface. † B. 1. de nup.

self * in the general church, what you are not ashamed to do among the Pelagians. I am one of the many who refute your profane novelties as we can." The most specious argument used by Julian was the use made of the imperial sanction against his party. How far the secular arm ought to be applied to the support of religion, has been already considered; and it was the duty of the magistrate then, as at all times, to determine how far the good of the people committed to his charge is connected with the spreading of opinions. I recollect, however, no account of any particular cruelties; nor does any thing more seem to have been actually done against the Pelagians by the state, than barely to inhibit the dissemination of their doctrines.†

Another argument used by Julian was drawn from the pains taken by the adversaries of Pelagius to seduce the people. Finding the vulgar every where prejudiced against the Pelagians, he speaks of the dregs of the populace stirred up against them, mariners, cooks, butchers, &c. :‡ but this is no uncommon event. The doctrines of grace, persecuted and despised, as they always have been by the great, bid fare for a more unprejudiced hearing among the poor. The common people heard our Lord gladly. The doctrines, which represent the misery of man and his need of grace, speak to the consciences of men; and those, whom deceitful learning and vain philosophy have not sophisticated, cannot but receive some impression. Pelagianism, so far as it respects the doctrines of sanctifying grace, is pretty much the same thing with that which is now called Socinianism. The abettors of the latter make the same complaints of the common people at this day; and they may thank themselves for the desertion of their congregations. Julian inscribed his writings to one Turbantius, a bishop, whom he highly commends; but this bishop afterwards forsook Pelagianism.

* B. 6. contra Julian. [c. 8. s. 22.] Apud Catholicos. In general I choose to avoid the expression of Catholics, and prefer the term general church as more proper, in opposition to the unfair use made of the word by the Papists.

† I have rather laid down the principles on which the civil power should act in a case of this nature, than given any opinion of the rectitude or impropriety of its conduct in the case of the Pelagians. Let the reader judge for himself: the labours of the ecclesiastics in councils and writings stand on a very different foundation.

‡ Aug. contra Julian, B. 2. c. 10. s. 37.

Notwithstanding the emperor's sentence in 418, Cœlestius ventured again to show himself in Rome, and about the year 420 was again expelled by an edict. Pelagianism being now reduced to the lowest ebb, Satan seems to have changed his mode of attacking the church, by inducing some ignorant persons, under a mistaken idea of honouring the doctrines of grace, to support opinions subversive of the free agency of man, and particularly to forbid men to rebuke sinners, and direct them only to pray for their conversion. * Augustine obviated these mistakes, and explained the consistency between the divine grace and human duty, in his treatise on Rebuke and Grace.†

Cœlestius expelled Rome by an edict, A.D. 420.

The two heresiarchs, after this, were reduced to a state which is of all others the most grating to proud minds, a state of obscurity. The island of Britain, it is certain, was afterwards disturbed with their doctrines, which, by the skill and authority of Germanus, whom we shall have occasion to mention hereafter, were confuted and overcome. Hence it is probable, that Pelagius, after having travelled through the Roman empire, and attempted in vain to overturn the doctrines of grace, retired to his native country. But nothing certain seems to be known further, either concerning him or Cœlestius.

There was a person named Leporius, a monk, afterwards a presbyter, who boasted of his purity, and ascribed it to his own power, and not to the grace of God. The man, however, was instructed by some teachers in Gaul, and particularly by the labours of Augustine, to know himself better.‡ In Africa he publicly owned the folly of his pride, and wrote also into Gaul a very humble confession of his self-righteousness. I know not how to obtain a

* See Mosheim, vol. i. [cent. v. p. 2. c. 5. s. 25.] It is not the business of an history to enlarge on the metaphysical difficulties with which this subject is necessarily clouded. I shall only here refer the reader to Edwards's masterly treatise on Free-will, which I think has not yet been answered. Had Mosheim better understood the grounds of the subject of human liberty, he would not so rashly have charged Augustine with inconsistency. [Mosheim merely says, that at first Augustine did not so fully explain his opinions as he subsequently did, and hence gave some occasion to these mistakes.]

† [The Treatises de gratia et libero arbitrio, et de correptione et gratiâ, were both written to correct these errors.]

‡ [August. Ep. 219. Gennad. de. vir. illust. c. 59.]

sight of his writings; but they would probably give us an edifying view of the conversion of a Pharisee.*

If Satan cannot gain his point entirely, in aspersing the grace of God, he will be content to do it in part. And this, for the trial of men's sincerity, was unhappily the case in regard to this present controversy. Pure Pelagianism itself was lost, at least for many ages: nor did any man dare, for a long series of years, to revive it. The works of Augustine were found so agreeable to the Scriptures, that while they were regarded as the sole standard of Christian authority, a doctrine which set aside the necessity of grace altogether could gain no hearing in the church. And in the Western world such an addition of light was obtained, as no doubt proved highly serviceable to advance the kingdom of Christ. But tares were sown: Semi-Pelagianism arose, and maintained itself among many, and continues to this day the admired system of all those who seek to unite the arts of secular greatness with some regard for Christian orthodoxy. Its language is, that though man cannot persevere in virtue without divine grace, yet he can turn himself at first to God. Vitalis,† of Carthage, seems to have been its beginner, who taught that our obedience to the Gospel was no otherwise the effect of grace, than that men cannot believe, except the word be preached to them. Thus, external revelation was put in the room of the secret, effectual energy of the Holy Spirit. The Pelagians, who had lost their first ground, retreated hither, and maintained, that grace was given according to that merit of men, which they showed in attending to the word and to prayer. Some presbyters in Marseilles were at the head of this scheme, which is so specious, and carries such an air of moderation between vicious extremes, that it seems folly to oppose it by any other arms than those of Scripture and experience. Men, who know themselves, and suffer the decisions of the divine word to prevail over their consciences, will see through the delusion, which can scarcely fail to overcome all whose religion is theory without conscience.

John Cassian, a Scythian, a monk of eminence, and a

* Cassian, b. i. de Incar. Christi. c. 2, 3, and 4.
† [Augustin. Ep. 217.]

man much renowned at that time, was the pillar of this doctrine. He lived at Marseilles, and opposed the bishop of Hippo. Prosper and Hilary withstood him, and some monuments of the writings of the former will afterwards be considered. In consequence of their desires, Augustine wrote his two last books on Predestination, and the gift of perseverance. Still, however, the contest between Semi-Pelagianism, and the adversaries to it, continued some time; Cassian labouring on one side, and Prosper and Hilary* on the other.

Such was the rise, progress, and consequences of this most important heresy in the Church of Christ. THERE MUST INDEED BE HERESIES IN THE CHURCH, THAT THEY WHICH ARE APPROVED MAY BE MADE MANIFEST. The effects of them are, that the wicked in the church are more distinctly separated from the godly; the former are made worse, or at least appear so to be; the latter are purified and made white, and every way improved, both in the understanding, spirit, and power of true religion. Let frivolous controversies, which involve no nutrimental truths of Godliness, be hushed and buried in oblivion, as soon as possible, because they are incapable of producing any thing but strife and vanity. But it was indefensible in Mosheim to lament over the Pelagian disputes, as erroneous on both sides, when in truth the controversy was the same which has ever been between holy men and mere men of the world; between grace and human merit;† and though in Augustine's time the question turned principally upon sanctification, in Luther's time on justification, yet the glory of God in the grace of Jesus Christ, the importance of genuine faith, and the nature and efficacy of the influences of the Holy Ghost, were equally concerned in the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius, between Luther and the Papists, and I will venture to say, on scriptural grounds, between Paul the Apostle and Saul of Tarsus,—that is, between the spirit and doctrine of an humbled publican, and of a self-righteous Pharisee.

* [Not the bishop of Arles, both Prosper and Hilary, are supposed by many to have been laymen.]

† See Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. cent. i. p. 2. c. 3. s. 12., compared with [cent. v. p. 2. c. 5. s. 27.] That he, who in one place maintains the importance of justification by faith, should in another despise the controversies occasioned by it, seems a great and manifest inconsistency.

CHAP. IV.

PELAGIAN DOCUMENTS.

THE question, "Whether man needs the influence of the Holy Spirit to render him truly pious and holy, or has sufficient resources in his own nature for this end," involves so much of the very essence and genius of Christianity, that compared with it a thousand other objects of debate in the church are reduced to mere insignificance. For on the right resolution of this question will depend, what ideas we ought to form of the Christian doctrines of original sin, regeneration, salvation by the grace of Jesus Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost. All parties are convinced that men ought to be good and virtuous; but does it therefore follow that the Pelagian opinions on these points imply no more than a mere nominal difference of system? So men are always willing to represent the subject, who have no sense of innate depravity. But those who feel themselves "tied and bound with the chain of their sins," will think it of essential importance to inquire, how they may be freed from this state; nor can they be contented with the external decencies of morality, while they find themselves void of the love of God and internal holiness. The Scripture decides this controversy clearly and amply; but it is my business to state as faithfully as I can, the sentiments of the ancient church upon it. Till Pelagius arose, the necessity of internal efficacious grace was not disputed. He denied the existence of such a principle altogether; though, as we have seen, with much artificial equivocation. I must do justice to both parties; and review briefly, yet clearly, the sentiments of those who distinguished themselves in the controversy. One conclusion to be drawn from the whole is this, that as there is no new thing under the sun, so the Lord raises up from age to age, men to defend his real truths in the world.

I shall begin with taking some notice of a treatise found in the works of Ambrose, which I omitted in the review of his writings, because, both the difference of style, and the reference in it to the Pelagian controversy, which was after his time, demonstrate it not to be his. Much has been said * to determine

Ambrose on the Vocation of the Gentiles.

* See Du Pin's elaborate criticism in his Hist. of cent. v.

who was the author of it. Its title is, OF THE VOCATION OF ALL THE GENTILES. Whoever wrote it,* he was evidently a person well versed in Scripture, master of a good style, and well skilled in argumentation. As he has exhibited that moderate view of the doctrine of grace, which I think most agreeable to Scripture, and remarkably coincident with the doctrines of the Church of England, it will be proper to mention his leading thoughts, as a suitable introduction to the rest.

He begins, like a man of deep reflection, conscious of the difficulties which his subject involves: "A [c. 1.] great and arduous question," says he, "is agitated between the defenders of Free-will and the preachers of the Grace of God. It is inquired, whether God would have all men to be saved? and as this is undeniable, it is further inquired, why the will of the Almighty is not fulfilled?—Thus, no limit is found of contrary disputations, while men do not distinguish what is manifest from what is secret." He describes the effects of the Fall as destructive of faith, hope, understanding, and will, for the purposes of holiness and salvation; and he affirms, that no man has any resources for deliverance; because, though by natural understanding he may endeavour to oppose his vices, and may, in an outward way, adorn this temporal life, yet he cannot proceed to true virtue and eternal bliss. "For without the worship of God, what seems to be virtue, is [c. 7, 8.] sin, and cannot please God."†—Let no man trust in human strength, which, even when entire, stood not; but let him seek victory by Him, who alone is invincible, and conquered for all. And if he seeks, let him not doubt but that the desire of seeking has been received from Him whom he seeks.—He goes on to quote the well-known passages from the prophets, concerning the effectual grace of God. "For he writes his laws on their hearts, that they may receive the knowledge of God, not by [c. 9.] man's teaching, but by the instruction of the great Teacher, because "neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase,"‡—To this day is fulfilled what the Lord promised

* It seems, however, to have been the production of this century.
† See Article xiii. of the church of England. ‡ [1 Cor. iii. 7.]

to Abraham without condition, and gave without law.—And those who obey not the Gospel are the more inexcusable ; but it is certain that they are not according to the foreknowledge of God the sons of Abraham. He promised that these should obey, when he said, " I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever." He promised that they should persevere, when he said, " I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." *

He takes particular notice of the direction, in the first Epistle to Timothy, of praying for all men without exception ; and observes, that it was regarded [c. 12.] in all Christian assemblies ; and that the church prayed not only for the regenerate, but for all, even the worst of characters. " And, what she prayed for them was, doubtless, that they might be converted. And, as conversion was what it was not in their power to do for themselves, the merciful and just Lord would have us to pray for all, that where we see innumerable persons recovered from such an abyss of evil, we may not doubt that God has performed these great things ; and praising him for what he has done, may hope he will still do the same for those who are yet in darkness. As for those, for whom the prayers of the church are not heard, we ought to refer it to [c. 13.] the secrets of Divine Justice. We know but in part. O the depth ! "—

Thus does this judicious Divine resolve into human ignorance the great difficulty which has agitated men of thought in all ages. Whoever is disposed to do the same will have no objection to admit the doctrine of election IN THIS SENSE ; nor is any other submission of the understanding required, than that reasonable one which bishop Butler so admirably enforces in his Analogy. [c. 17.] " The redemption of Christ, he observes, would be looked on in a mean light, if Justification, which is by grace, were made to depend on previous merits.—If then grace find some of the vilest characters, whom it adopts in the very departure out of life, when yet many, who seem less guilty, are void of this gift, who can say this is without the dispensation of God ? "—And he goes on to prove sal-

* [Jer. xxxii. 39, and 40.]

vation to be of mere grace altogether, by a happy arrangement of Scripture passages.

[c. 21.] "If it be asked, why the Saviour of all men has not given this sensation to all, to know the true God and his Son Jesus Christ,—what God hath secreted from us should not be investigated; what he hath manifested should not be denied. No genius whatever can discover the reasons of the divine dispensation in these things. Doubtless, however, the whole good of [c. 23.] man, from the beginning of faith to the consummation of perseverance, is a divine work and gift." Yet he demonstrates, that men's departure from God is the consequence of their own will, and not properly the act of a divine constitution. And he proves from Scripture likewise, that Christ died for all men, and that he is so to be preached to all the world.* He maintains,† on the whole, three propositions: 1st, That it is the property of the Divine Goodness to desire that all may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 2nd, That every one who is saved is directed by the grace of God, and by the same grace kept unto the end. The 3rd modestly protests, that not all the plan of the divine will can be comprehended, and that many causes of divine works are above human understanding. "If insidious malignity will stop, if insolent presumption will demur, these things being firmly established, we need not distract ourselves with endless questions."

But enough has been said to give the reader an idea of this author, whose thoughts and views of Scripture are greatly superior to those of the fourth and fifth centuries in general. Whosoever he was, he seems to have taken up his pen toward the close of the Pelagian controversy in a modest and temperate spirit.

So exactly are his sentiments coincident with those of the best and wisest in all ages of Christianity, that we may see the great benefit resulting to the church, in the event, from the Pelagian controversy; and while we look at the writings of the rest, his ideas will stand as a model, solid and scriptural.

St. Peter tells us of those who PRIVILY bring in damnable

* B. ii. c. 16. † [B. ii. c. 30.]

heresies.* In Pelagius this insidiousness we have observed to be very remarkable: but it seems a common character of heresy. A free and open and consistent support of what is believed to be true is as common a mark of genuine orthodoxy. I shall attempt, however, to lay before the reader, so far as the deceitfulness of the man and the scantiness of materials will afford, a view of Pelagianism from Pelagius's own mouth. Some of the documents have been glanced at in the course of the history already. Besides these, he wrote, in imitation of Cyprian, a treatise of Testimonies. Jerome gives an account of this work, and from him it appears, that it contained the same things which were objected to him in the Palestine synod. He wrote also some short notes on St. Paul's Epistles, doubtless with a view to accommodate them to his own system. I have repeatedly to regret, that the works of the Fathers have come down to us so highly injured by fraud. Here is a remarkable instance: some short notes on St. Paul's Epistles are subjoined to Jerome's undoubted comments, which were certainly not written by Jerome, an open Anti-Pelagian, but must have been written by Pelagius himself, or some genuine disciple of his. They agree with the account, which Augustine gives of Pelagius's work of this sort; and certainly St. Paul's expression, in the ninth of the Romans, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," is interpreted in the Pseudo-Jerome exactly as Augustine tells us Pelagius interpreted it. † On the passage, "without the law sin was dead," the commentator asserts, they are mad who assert that sin is derived to us from Adam. Nor will he allow, that Adam and Christ introduced, the one sin, the other righteousness into the world, in any other sense than by example. He all along supports that forced interpretation. On the passage, "by the offence of one many

* 2 Peter ii. 1.

† B. de gest. Pelag. c. xvi.—See Jansenius, b. i.—Pelagius said, that it was to be understood as spoken by an adversary, that the Apostle was personating one who was finding fault, and asking how St. Paul's doctrine of free-will could stand, since it does not depend on him that wills or runs, but on God that showeth mercy. Thus is St. Paul made to defend a doctrine quite opposite to the whole current of his argument; and that which he really maintained is put into the mouth of an adversary. However strained and unnatural the interpretation be, it has been equalled by modern Pelagians, who are commonly called Socinians.

be dead," he observes, because not only sinners, but righteous men also die by a common and natural death. What St. Paul speaks of concupiscence he will allow to be understood only of depraved habit; and in the seventh of Romans maintains that St. Paul speaks in an assumed character. The works of the law which cannot justify, he maintains to be circumcision and the other rites of the Mosaic law, and not moral works. And the grace derived from Christ, he contends to be his example. Something he allows of grace in the forgiveness of sins, nothing in the effectual work of sanctification. Charity, he observes, is from ourselves: and he maintains also, that real saints are perfect and spotless. Predestination also he excludes, except what is founded on the foreknowledge of men's faith and obedience.

Thus it appears that heresies are revived, from age to age, with new names, and under new dresses, carrying the appearance of something original, and not allowed to be the same things which had been long ago exploded and refuted. For how often have we heard all this, which appears to be real Pelagianism, maintained in our own times? *

The last treatise, which we have reviewed, was probably that of Pelagius altogether, or certainly it belonged to some of his disciples, and is itself a sufficient proof, that his tenets were not misrepresented by his antagonists.† Further proofs, however, of what Pelagianism is, drawn from the writings of its own defender, remain to be considered.

There is, in the fourth volume of Jerome's works, which indeed consists of tracts by various authors, an explanation of a creed, inscribed to Damasus, which, by its agreement with divers citations from it by Augustine, in the most exact manner, appears to belong to Pelagius, and it is worthy of his subtilty. He mentions the common articles of faith, and anathematizes various heresies, which all the church condemns; and, among the rest, "the blasphemy of those who say, that any thing impossible is commanded to man by God. We so confess free-will, that we say we always need the assistance of God, and those are equally in error, who say that man cannot sin, with those who say he

* Jans. b. i.

† Since I wrote the above, I have seen the Benedictine edition of Augustine's Works, and find these Pelagian Notes in the last volume, which the editors, without hesitation, ascribe to Pelagius.

cannot avoid sin. For both take away the liberty of the will. But we say, that man always can sin, and not sin, that we may confess we are always free in our wills. This is the faith, blessed father, (Damasus, of Rome) which we have learned in the Catholic church, which we have always held and do hold. In which, if there is any position less skilful and less cautious, we desire to be corrected by you." The fault of the creed is certainly not want of caution, but the excess of it. Under the specious term of freedom of will, in which natural * and moral inability are confounded, as if they were the same thing, he undermined the essential doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit, though in a very covert manner; and asserted with an audacity almost unparalleled, that he had learned his creed in the Catholic church, which had at all times hitherto expressly owned the doctrines of grace and the fall of man, while he himself appears not to have believed either the one or the other, and was labouring with all his might to eradicate both from the Christian world.

But let the reader judge for himself what the real sentiments of this ambiguous politician were, from a work undoubtedly his, by his own confession.† I mean the letter to Demetrias, and which is falsely ascribed to Jerome. As it is much too long to quote, I shall select such parts as tend most decisively to show the real religious opinions of this heresiarch, which have been much misrepresented in our times.

"To DEMETRIAS, a virgin :‡

If, in dependence on the greatest genius and equal knowledge, I should think myself capable of writing, yet I could not enter on so arduous a task without great fear. However, I must write to Demetrias, a virgin of Christ, noble and rich, and what is greater than these, one who tramples on nobility and riches by the ardour of faith—who, sprung from the noblest family, and brought up in the greatest wealth and delicacies, hath suddenly broke from the most tenacious blandishments of life, who hath cut down the flower of youth by the sword of [c. 1.]

* Jans. b. i. vii.

† Jerome's ivth, tom. 5. ‡ [Augustini Opera. vol. xvi. p. 142. ed. Ven. 4to.]

faith, that is, by her will.—But it is difficult to treat with such a character, in which there is so great a desire of learning, and so great ardour for perfection, that any doctrine, however perfect, can scarcely equal her merit.—We write at the entreaty of her holy mother.—As often as
[c. 2.] I have to speak of the plan of a holy life, I use first to show the powers of human nature, and what it really can do, and thence to encourage the mind of the hearer to press after virtue, lest it should be of no service to call men to that which they have presumed to be impossible. For hope is the spring and source of all activity in the road of virtue. If persons despair, their efforts flag entirely. The resources of nature are therefore to be declared, that men may press toward the mark of perfection, lest, while men are unconscious of their inherent powers, they think they have not what they really have. Let this be the foundation of a spiritual life, that the virgin may know her own strength, which she may then exercise well, when she has learned that she has it.—First, then, measure the goodness of human nature from its Author, who, when he made all things very good, must have made man perfectly so. Let man learn to know the dignity of his nature, when he sees strong animals placed in subjection to him. God would have him to be a volunteer, not a slave; and therefore he left him in the hand of his own counsel.—Take care you stumble not on the rock of the ignorant vulgar;
[c. 3.] and do not think that man was created evil, because he can do evil. In the freedom of the will all the honour and dignity of nature consist; and from the same principle originates the praise of every good man. There would be no virtue in man, if he could not pass to evil. Man could not practise goodness spontaneously, were it not equally in his power to do evil.—But most persons impiously, no less than ignorantly, find fault as it were with the divine workmanship. The goodness of nature is so apparent, that it shows itself even among Gentiles. How many virtuous philosophers have we read and heard of! whence their goodness, were not nature good? How much more virtuous may Christians be, who have Christ's instructions, and the assistance of divine grace." *

* Augustine teaches us what Pelagius means by grace, as we shall see

He goes on to speak of the virtues of Abel, Enoch, Melchizedec, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job, and describes them as all derived from the natural powers of man, "that you may understand, how great is the goodness of nature." He proceeds to deny the apostasy and depravity of nature in the fullest manner, asserting, "that the only cause which makes it difficult to do well, is the force of bad habit." "Now, if before the law, and long before the coming of our Saviour Christ, men led holy lives, how much more after his coming are they able to do it." He speaks of the grace of Christ, expiation by his blood, and encouragement derived from his example; but he only just mentions these things, without insisting on them.—"Why do we loiter and blame the infirmity of nature? He would not command us what is impossible." Some rules of morality, which are indeed the best part of the letter, lose their efficacy, because the writer laid the foundation of them all in pride and self-sufficiency.

[c. 5, 6 & 7.] [c. 8.] [c. 16.]

Augustine and his friend Alypius being both together at Hippo, received a letter from Juliana, the mother of Demetrias, who acknowledges the receipt of their letter, warning against heresies.* She thanks them for the admonition, but appears to insinuate that it was unnecessary to her family, which had never been infected with any heresy. She seems to mean the errors relating to the Trinity, and to have had no clear idea of the Pelagian heresy, then new in the world. These two charitable pastors having heard of the letter which had been sent to Demetrias, thought it right to detect the poison contained in it more fully, by a reply:

"Your words oblige us not to be silent concerning those who labour to corrupt what is sound—nor is it a small error, for men to think they have in themselves whatever is obtained of righteousness and piety; and that God helps us no further than by the light of revelation; and that nature and doctrine are the only grace of God. To have a good will, and to have love,

Remarkable letter of Augustine and his friend Alypius.

elsewhere. Certain it is, that he never allows it to mean the operation of sanctifying influences. The whole current of the letter before us, denying the evil nature of man as a lapsed creature, and asserting the sufficiency of man in his own powers, is opposed to such a sentiment.

* [Augustin. Ep. 188.]

[Sect. 3-5.] the queen of virtues, they say our own arbitration suffices. But what says the Apostle? The LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS GIVEN TO US, that no man may think he has it from himself. I find in the same letter of Pelagius to Demetrias these words: * 'You have therefore something on account of which you may be preferred to others, for nobility and opulence are rather of your family than of you; but spiritual riches none can confer on you, but yourself. In these you are justly to be praised, in these deservedly to be preferred to others, which cannot be but from yourself and in yourself.' † True it is, they must be in you; but to say they are from you, is poison. Far be the virgin of Christ from hearing these things, who piously knows the poverty of the human heart, and therefore knows not how to be adorned but with the gifts of her spouse. Let her rather hear the Apostle: I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ; but I fear, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, &c.‡ —In every thing give thanks.—Ye do so, because ye have

[Sect. 7.] it not of yourselves. For who hath distinguished you from [that] mass of death and perdition [derived from Adam?] Was it not he who came to seek and save the lost? When the Apostle says, who made thee to differ? does he answer, my good will, my faith, my righteousness? does he not say, what hast thou that thou hast not received?—We hope, considering the humility in

[Sect. 9.] which Demetrias was educated, that when she read the words which I quoted from the letter, if she have read them, she sighed, smote her breast, and perhaps wept, and prayed, that as these were not her words, so neither might they be her creed, that she might glory, not in herself, but in the Lord.—We well know how sound

[Sect. 10.] you are in the doctrine of the Trinity, but there are evils of another kind than those which affect that article of the Christian faith, evils which injure the

* They are the very same in the foregoing letter, but I omitted to quote the part.

† Pelagius followed the maxims of philosphers, not of the Scriptures. Horace says, æquum mî animum ipse parabo. But I might quote passages without end from the classic authors to the same purpose, whom numbers called Christian since the time of Pelagius have followed. What is this but to call Paganism Christianity?

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3.

glory of the whole Trinity.—If you narrowly observe, though the writer speaks of grace, he does it with guarded ambiguity; it may mean nature, or doctrine, or forgiveness of sins, or the example of Christ. But find, if you can, one word that owns a positive influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind, actually imparting the power of loving God: gladly would we see such a confession in some much-admired writers; but as yet we could never discover it." [Sect. 11.] [Sect. 12 & 13.]

From these two Epistles the state of the Pelagian controversy appears. The heretic, though little inclined to regard grace in any sense, did not deny that forgiveness of sins might be granted; but as he denied the corruption of nature, he could never think sin to be so sinful as the word of God describes it. He dwelt on the grace of Scripture revelation, and the example of Christ; but he loved to expatiate most freely on the powers of nature itself. But grace, as it means the gift of the Holy Spirit, renewing and sanctifying the will, he denied altogether. Augustine defended this as an essential of godliness, and therefore it appears always prominent on the face of the Pelagian controversy. It was a point of the utmost consequence: for it draws along with it all the other essential doctrines.

In the works of Ambrose * we have another letter, under the name of Ambrose, addressed to the same virgin Demetrias: it seems written in the latter times of the controversy, and could not therefore be a letter of Ambrose. Probably it was written by the anonymous author of the treatise on the Calling of the Gentiles. Certainly it resembles his manner both in style and sentiment; and a few quotations from it will deserve to be inserted here. He appears to have seen, in perfect harmony with Augustine, that the real stress of the controversy lay, not in a speculative set of doctrines, but in the solid provision made for humility. The doctrine of efficacious grace provides for this, Pelagianism excludes it. And on this single point the whole merit of the controversy may safely be made to depend. "There must," he observes, "be an uniting grace, which confederates and harmonizes the multifold unity of the saints and their beautiful variety. Another letter to Demetrias.

* Ep. lxxxiv. p. 185. [it is usually found with the works of Prosper.]

This grace is true humility.—In various duties there are various degrees of virtue: but in genuine humility every thing is sold and indivisible, and therefore it makes all its subjects to be one, because it admits of no inequality. The peculiarity then of this grace lies in the confession of the grace of God, which is wholly rejected, unless it be wholly received. That man ejects himself out of grace, who distrusts its fulness, as if man needed the help of God in one part, and did not need it in another part of his actions; as if any moment could be assigned, in which it would not be ruinous to him to be deprived of the Holy Spirit. He, indeed, in the essence of the Deity, is everywhere, and all-comprehensive; but is conceived in a certain manner to recede from those, whom he ceases to govern. And the cessation of his aid is to be conceived as his absence, which that man madly thinks to be useful to himself, who rejoices in his good actions, and thinks that he rather than God hath wrought them. The grace of God must therefore be owned in the fullest and most unqualified sense; the first office of which is, that his help be felt. "We have not received," says the Apostle, "the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." * Whence, if any man think that he has any good things of which God is not the author, but himself, he has not the Spirit of God, but of the world, and swells with that secular wisdom, of which it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise." † Amidst all the evils of men, to glory in our own intellects, instead of divine illumination, in knowing God, and to be elated in ourselves at the expense of the divine glory, is most dangerous. To desire to be preferred before all, is mischievous; much more so to take a man's hope from the Lord, and fix it on himself. Is not this to fulfil that scripture, 'Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.' ‡ It is the very sin of the devil, which ejected him from heaven. And he drew our first parents into the same, causing them to rest in the liberty of their own will. Men more easily guard against this pride in evil things; in virtues it is most studiously to be repelled, because he to whom praise seems

* 1 Cor. ii. 12. † [1 Cor. i. 19.] ‡ Jerem. xvii. 5.

due, is speciously ensnared by the temptation. Satan, in this respect, has his eye peculiarly on the active, the sober, the chaste, and the virtuous; he would ruin them by the pride of self-sufficiency. Innumerable souls, and the churches in general, have withstood the infection of the new doctrine; but some souls have imbibed the poison. Hence the insidious commendation of human nature, and the defence of its original rectitude as ever preserved unblemished. Hence Adam's sin has been asserted to be noxious only by example; hence in fact the abolition of infant-baptism; hence the unsound confession of grace, as bestowed according to merit—hence the perfidy of owning, among us, the wounds of original sin, and of declaring, among their own partisans, that Adam hurt us only by example.—But while the Lord Jesus says, the whole need not a physician, but the sick, they, though silent, cry aloud in pride, We are whole, we need not a physician. Consider what is done in regeneration, not looking only at the external sign, but also at the inward grace. Are not vessels of wrath changed into vessels of mercy? and men born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God?—Says not Christ, without me ye can do nothing? Does any man say, that he abides in Christ, who doubts of Christ's working in him?" After quoting a number of very pertinent scriptures, he goes on; "Every godly motion of the illuminated mind is not to be separated from the human will, because man does nothing right, except what he does willingly; but a right intention of mind is the effect of the inspiration of the divine will. Other sins mar only the virtues to which they stand opposed; this of self-righteousness, while it assumes all, mars every thing. The image of God is genuine, when it is adorned with no other ornaments than what are received from the Heavenly Husband. Humility and charity are kindred virtues, inseparably connected, insomuch, that what St. Paul asserts of the latter,* may safely be predicated of the former."

The whole epistle is excellent, and a treasure of evangelical doctrine. But let us proceed to other monuments of antiquity.

The letter of the African council,† in which Aurelius, of

* 1 Cor. xiii. † Ep. 90. or 175.

Carthage, presided, and which was addressed to Innocent, of Rome, contains the following sentiments: "They (the Pelagians) attempt, by their praises of free-will, to leave no room for the grace of God, by which we are Christians, the Lord saying, if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. They assert, that the grace of God consists in this, that he hath so created the nature of man, that by his own will he can fulfil the law of God. The law itself too they reckon to belong to grace, because God hath given it for a help to men. But the real grace of God, by which a man is caused to delight in the law after the inward man, they will not acknowledge, though they dare not openly oppose it. Yet, what else do they in effect, while they teach, that human nature is alone sufficient to enable men to obey the law? Not attending to the Scripture, 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;' And, 'we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.' We beseech you to observe the necessary consequence of such opinions, namely, that we have no occasion, on their plan, to pray that we enter not into temptation: nor had our Lord occasion to say to Peter, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. He might have contented himself, with exhorting or commanding him to keep his faith. And, instead of saying to his disciples, watch and pray, it would have sufficed to say, watch. When St. Paul prays, that the Ephesians might be strengthened with might in the inner man by his Spirit, they, in consistency with their plan, might have said, they might be strengthened with might, by the ability of nature received in our creation. It follows too, that infants need not to be baptized at all, as being perfectly innocent, and needing no redemption."

A letter from the African Council.

Innocent * agreed with the ideas of the council in his reply. We have next in order the letter of the Milevitanian council to the same Innocent,† in which Pelagianism is opposed in a similar manner, and a good use is made of the contrast between the first and second Adam, in the fifth chapter to the Romans. And from these and many other testimonies, it is evident that the great instrument by which

* 91. [or 181.] † 92. [or 176.]

Pelagius deceived men was, that he used the word grace in a sense which certainly is not scriptural. With him, whatever is the gift of God, is called grace; so that a man, who, by the use of his natural powers, in conjunction with the aid of the revealed will of God, should expect to please God, might be said to seek to be saved by grace; though it is certain, that the term in the New Testament is restrained to spiritual blessings.

Augustine, in conjunction with a few other bishops, wrote again to Innocent.* "Without doubt, says he, the grace by which we are saved, is not that with which we are created. For if those bishops† who acquitted Pelagius, had understood that he called that grace, which we have in common with the wicked, and that he denied that which we have as Christians and sons of God, he would have appeared intolerable. I blame not then his judges, who understood the word grace in its common acceptation. Pelagius alone is not now our object; perhaps he is corrected; (I wish it may be the case;) but many souls are in danger of being beguiled. Let him be sent for to Rome, and asked what he means precisely by the term grace; or let him explain himself by letter; and if he be found to speak in the same manner as the church of Christ, let us rejoice in him. For whether he calls grace free-will, or remission of sins, or the precept of the law, he explains not that grace of the Holy Spirit, which conquers lusts and temptations, and which He who ascended into heaven has poured on us abundantly. He who prays, 'lead us not into temptation,' does not pray, that he may be a man, that he may have free-will, nor for the remission of sins, the subject of the former petition, nor that he may receive a command. Prayer itself then is a testimony of GRACE, [let him allow this,] and we shall rejoice that he is right, or corrected. Law and grace are to be distinguished: the law commands, grace bestows. If you will look into the book of Pelagius, given us by Timasius and Jacob, and take the trouble to examine the places, which we have marked, you will find, that to the objection made to him, that he denied the grace of God, he replies, that this grace was the nature in which God created us. If he disown the book, or those

A letter of Augustine to Innocent.

* 95. [or 177.]

† He means the Synod at Lydda.

passages, we contend not, let him anathematize them, and confess in plain words the grace which Christian doctrine teaches, which is not nature, but nature saved; not by external doctrine, but by the supply of the Spirit and secret mercy. For though natural gifts may be called grace, yet that grace, by which we are predestinated, called, justified, glorified, is quite a different thing. It is of this the Apostle speaks, when he says, if by grace, then it is no more of works. And, to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. For if Christ had not died for our sins, Pelagius's possibility of nature, which he makes to be grace, would have been just the same."

But I must quote no more of this excellent epistle, in which the very hinge, on which the controversy turned, is explained, and which affords an easy key to solve all the perplexities and ambiguities, with which the opposers of grace, ancient or modern, so much darken the subject.

Innocent agrees with Augustine, but writes not like a master of the subject. Indeed his importance in the controversy was rather founded on his local situation, than on any great character either of learning or piety.

In his letters to Sixtus, the Roman presbyter, Augustine answers Pelagian objections.* "They think that God is by this means made a respecter of persons. They do not consider, that due punishment is inflicted on the condemned, not due grace bestowed on the acquitted. But it is unjust, they say, that one be acquitted, the other punished in the same cause. Truly, it is just that both be punished. Who can deny it?" He goes on to quote Rom. ix. "But why the Lord frees this man rather than that, let him examine, who can fathom the depth of divine judgment; but let him BEWARE OF THE PRECIPICE. In the mean time, to him, who lives as yet by faith, and sees but in part, it is enough to know or believe, that God frees none but by gratuitous mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he condemns none but with the strictest truth by the same our Lord Jesus Christ."

Letters to Sixtus. [Ep. 194. Sect. 4.]

[Sect. 5.]

[Sect. 23.]

Vitalis, of Carthage, though not a Pelagian by profes-

* 104, [or 191,] 105, [or 194.]

sion, taught that men were indebted to their own free-will for their conversion to God, and not to the operations of divine grace. Augustine * undertakes to convince him of his error, by pressing upon his conscience the duty confessed by Christians to be binding on all men who professed Christianity, namely, to pray for their fellow creatures; for infidels, that they might believe; for catechumens, that God would inspire them with a desire for regeneration; and for the faithful, that they may persevere. He shows, that the necessary consequence of Vitalis's sentiments was, that the pastors should content themselves with preaching the doctrine to men without praying for them, as he confined his idea of divine grace to the exhibition of the doctrine to mankind. He presses this argument on the conscience of Vitalis, by giving repeated scriptural proof of the duty of praying for all sorts of men, which would be rendered altogether nugatory by the Pelagian sentiments.

The letter to Anastasius breathes an evangelical spirit of charity, distinguishes that Christian grace from the spirit of slavish fear, and in no mean degree leads the humbled soul from the Law to the Gospel, opposing, toward the close, the Pelagian pride, which, teaching man to trust in himself, mars the whole design of Christianity.† The whole is so excellent, that I am tempted to transcribe; but brevity must be studied, and it will be no contemptible fruit of my labour, if young theological students be incited to read such a Divine as Augustine for themselves.

Letter to Anastasius.

In a small epistolary treatise concerning the Baptism of Infants,‡ he argues from the confessed antiquity and propriety of their baptism, admitted by Pelagians themselves, to the proof of the doctrine of original sin, and, toward the close, he thus rebukes the pretensions to perfection made by those heretics: "As to their affirming, that some men have lived or do live without sin, it were to be wished it were so; it is to be endeavoured, that it may be so; it is to be prayed, that it may be so; nor yet is it to be trusted, that it is so. For to those, who wish and strive and pray with just supplica-

On Baptism of Infants.

Lib. 3. c. 13. s. 23.

* 107, [or 217.]

† Ep. 144 [or 145.]

‡ [Liber de Peccat. Merit. et remissione et de Parvul: Baptismo ad Marcell. tom. 13.]

tion, whatever remains of sin is daily remitted through this their cordial prayer, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Whoever asserts that this prayer is in this life unnecessary to any the most holy persons, (I except the MOST HOLY ONE alone,) he greatly mistakes, and pays a compliment, I am persuaded, very unacceptable to him whom he commends. If he think himself to be such a one, 'he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him,' for no other reason but that he thinks falsely. The Physician, who is not needful for the whole, but for the sick, knows in his method of cure how to perfect us for eternal salvation, who does not even take away death, the wages of sin, from those whose sins he yet forgives, that even in their struggles to overcome the fear of it, they might undertake a contest for the sincerity of faith: and in some things he does not assist even his righteous ones to perfect righteousness, lest they should be lifted up; that so, while no man living is justified in his sight, we might be indebted constantly to him for forgiveness, and thank him for the same; and thus by holy humility be healed and recovered from that first cause of all vices, THE SWELLING OF PRIDE."

I may not dwell much on the larger treatises.* The books † to Marcellinus against the Pelagians are the works of a master. In them he solidly confutes the idea of sinless perfection, and in answering their arguments, shows the nature of the controversy at that time. He defends the doctrine of original sin, and the custom of baptizing infants, and evinces the novelty of the Pelagian notion of man's original innocence since the fall.‡

The books to Marcellinus.

In his book of Nature and Grace he argues in much the same manner, and opposes a Pelagian writer, who extolled nature, and who found fault with those who charged their sin on the weakness of the human powers. In this treatise he observes, that Pelagianism appears to him to make a man forget why he is a Christian.§ His two books,‖ written expressly against Pelagius, contain

On Nature and Grace.

* [The letter to Marcellinus, from which the previous extract is taken, forms the third book of this treatise in the later editions.]

† [De Peccat. Merit. et de Spirit. et litterâ.] ‡ Aug. opera. tom. vi. or 13.

§ Tom. vi. or 13. ‖ [De gratiâ et de Peccat. orig.]

a shrewd answer to a shrewd adversary. Augustine's inaccurate notion of the term justification, confounding it with sanctification, appears very plainly in this treatise, * of which more hereafter. In the same treatise appears also Pelagius's false notion of grace, as consisting in external revelation only. The heretic's idea of "power" from God, and of "will" from man, mentioned in the beginning of this treatise, is remarkably descriptive of his sentiments. Augustine's tract of Predestination and Grace is agreeable to his other works. † In the same volume are the epistles of Prosper and Hilary, concerning Semi-Pelagianism in Gaul. Their coincidence in sentiment with Augustine is apparent, and the rise of this heresy and its views are by them illustrated.

His observations on the good of perseverance show us his notion of this grace, ‡ which seems, however, different from the account in the sixth and tenth chapters of St. John. On Perseverance.

Satan ever inclines men to extremes; and there were not wanting those, who, owning the doctrine of grace so strenuously preached by Augustine, began to think it wrong or absurd to rebuke men for sin. "If I act wrong, I am not to be blamed, but God is to be prayed to, to give me what he has not given me. It would be right to blame me, if, through my own fault, I were debarred of the power of doing good." §

To answer these objections, and to show the consistency of the doctrines of grace with the use of means, exhortations, and endeavours, Augustine wrote his little tract of "Rebuke and Grace." ‖ He cannot be said to have done full justice to the subject: it required an accurate course of argumentation.¶ But the little which he says, is sufficient for serious and humble minds. The proud and the careless alone are overcome by such perversions as these which occasioned the tract. "O man, in precepts and commands, know what thou ought-test to possess; in rebukes, know that thou art [Sect. 5. On Rebuke and Grace.

* p. 166. † [De Prædest. Sanct. tom. 14.] ‡ [De Dono perseverant.]
§ [Lib. de correptione et gratiâ. c. 4.] ‖ Tom. vi. or 14.
¶ See the subject fully, and as appears unanswerably, considered in Edwards's Free-will.

disobedient through thy own fault; in prayer, know whence thou mayest receive what thou desirest."

[Sect. 7.] "Thou art to be rebuked, because thou art not willing to be rebuked. Thou wouldst not have thy vices to be shown thee: thou wouldst not have them smitten, nor have the wholesome pain, that thou mightest seek the physician."

"This is the utility of rebuke, which is used salubriously, sometimes in a greater, sometimes in a less degree, according to the diversity of sins; and is then wholesome, when the supreme Physician pleases." He shows that

[Sect. 9.] original sin in itself deserves rebuke, that from the pain of rebuke the regenerated will may arise, if the person rebuked be a son of promise, "that while the rod of correction sounds outwardly, God within may work to will and to do by secret inspiration."

He shows the difference between the state of Adam, when perfect, and that of the best Christians while on earth.

[Sect. 30.] "They, though far less comfortable than he, because of the manifold conflict of the new and the old man, are nevertheless supplied with much stronger grace, even that of God made man, to emancipate them from their evils."

Jerom's writings against Palagianism should now be considered. But of them it will suffice to say that he is no less than Augustine determined in his opposition to the heresy. His doctrine of grace is sound; and an humility of spirit highly adapted indeed to the subject, but very contrary to the natural temper of that choleric writer, appears. One short sentence deserves to be immortalized: HUNC HOMINIBUS SOLA PERFECTIO, SI IMPERFECTOS SE ESSE NOVERINT.* "THIS IS THE ONLY PERFECTION OF MEN, TO KNOW THEMSELVES IMPERFECT."

CHAP. V.

A SHORT VIEW OF AUGUSTINE'S "CITY OF GOD."

THE subject of this great work is so much of a piece with the history before us, the work itself is so remarkable a

* Jerom's works, vol. i. 91

monument of genius, learning, and piety united, and deserves so well both of the classical scholar and the theologian, that the reader will either expect some account of it, or at least excuse me, if I attempt it. Ecclesiastical antiquity has been too much depreciated in our times, and students in divinity have been discouraged from the study of the Fathers. In truth, a selection of them ought to be made; to praise or dispraise the primitive writers in general is obviously absurd. But Augustine's City of God deserves an unqualified commendation. The young student who shall meditate on it with deep attention, will find it richly to repay his labour; and the following review of its plan and contents may teach him what he is to expect from it. Augustine's City of God.

The capture of Rome by Alaric the Goth, and the subsequent plunder and miseries of the imperial city, had opened the mouths of the Pagans to blaspheme the true God, and to accuse Christianity as the cause of the declension of the empire. However trifling such an argument may now appear, at that time it had so great weight, that it gave occasion to Augustine, IN HIS ZEAL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD, to write this treatise.

The work itself consists of twenty-two books. The first states the objections made by the Pagans, and answers them in form. It was a remarkable fact, that all who fled to the churches [called the Basilicæ] of the Apostles, whether Christians or not, were preserved from military fury. The author takes notice of this singular circumstance, as a proof of the great authority of the name and doctrine of Christ, even among Pagans, and shows that no instance can be found in their history, where many vanquished people were spared out of respect to their religious worship. He justly observes, therefore, that the evils accompanying the late disaster ought to be ascribed to the usual events of war; the benefits to the power of the name of Christ. His thoughts on the promiscuous distribution of good and evil in this life are uncommonly excellent. "If all sin," he observes, "were now punished, nothing might seem to be reserved to the last judgment. If the Divinity punished no sin openly now, his providence might be denied. In like manner, in pros- Book 1st. [c. 8.]

perous things, if some petitions for temporal things were not abundantly answered, it might be said that they were not at God's disposal. If all petitions were granted, it might be thought that we should serve God only for the sake of worldly things." And in a number of elegant allusions he goes on to show the benefit of afflictions to the righteous, and the curse which accompanies them to the wicked.* He mentions also the propriety of punishing the godly often in this life, because they are not sufficiently weaned from the world, and because they do not rebuke the sins of the world as they ought, but conform too much to the taste of ungodly men. He answers the objections drawn from their sufferings in the late disaster. "Many Christians, say they, are led captive. It would be very miserable, he owns, if they could be led to any place, where they could not find their God." In the same book he excellently handles the subject of suicide, demonstrates its cowardice, and exposes the pusillanimity of Cato. He mentions the prayer of Paulinus, bishop of Nola, who had reduced himself to poverty for the sake of Christ, when the Barbarians laid waste his city: "Lord, suffer me not to be tormented on account of gold and silver; for where all my wealth is thou knowest." For there he had his all, where the Lord hath directed us to lay up our treasure, and he strongly insists, as the fullest answer to objections, that the saint loses nothing by all his afflictions.

[c. 14.] [c. 17—24.] [c. 10.]

Having sufficiently spoken to the particular occasion, he proceeds, in the second book, to wage OFFENSIVE WAR WITH THE PAGANS, and shows that while their religion prevailed, it never promoted the real benefit of men. In this book he proves his point with respect to moral evils. Immoral practices were not discouraged or prohibited in the least by the popular idolatry; but, on the contrary, vice and flagitiousness were encouraged. He triumphs in the peculiar excellence of Christian institutes, because by them instruction was constantly diffused among the body of the people, of which the whole

Book 2nd.

* Pari motu exagitatum et exhalat horribiliter cœnum, et suaviter fragrat unguentum, &c. It is a just recommendation of this treatise, that its Latinity is of a superior taste to that of his other works, which were written for the populace; this was meant for the perusal of philosophers.

system of Pagan-worship was void. His observations on Stage-plays,* and on the vicious manners of the Romans, even in the best times of their republic, as confessed by Sallust, or at least deduced by fair inference from his writings, are extremely worthy of attention. I have not seen a more just estimate anywhere of Roman virtue, than is to be found in this and some of the following books. The classical reader will do well to attend to his remarks, after he has made himself master of the historical facts. And, it is only one instance among many of the unhappy propensity of the age to infidelity, that the specious sophisms of Montesquieu concerning the virtue of the Roman republic, are so much sought after and held in such veneration, while the solid arguments of Augustine are scarcely known among us. He eloquently describes what sort of felicity a carnal heart would desire, and in the description, shows the unreasonableness of its wishes. In the same book will be found some valuable remains of Cicero de Republicâ, a most profound and ingenious treatise, of which a few fragments are preserved by Augustine, and which are introduced by him, to show, that, by Cicero's confession, the Roman state was completely ruined before the times of Christianity. The book concludes with a pathetic exhortation to unbelievers.

In the third book he demonstrates that the Pagans had no more help from their religion against natural evils, than they had against moral. He recounts the numberless miseries endured by the Romans long before the coming of Christ; such as would by malice have been imputed to the Christian religion had it then existed, some of which were more calamitous than any thing which they had lately sustained from the Goths. Book 3rd.

In the fourth book he demonstrates that the Roman felicity, such as it was, was not caused by their religion. Here he weighs the nature of that glory and extent of empire with which the carnal heart is so much captivated; and demonstrates, in the most solid manner, that a large extended empire is no more an evidence of felicity, than immense property is in private life; and whoever has been fascinated by political writers, an- Book 4th.

* By Roman laws, players could not be admitted into Roman citizenship.

cient or modern, into an admiration of this false glory, may see it excellently combated by the reasonings of Augustine. The Pantheistic philosophy, of which the old sages are full, is ridiculed, and the futility of all the popular religions exposed. In the conclusion he gives a short view of the dispensations of Providence towards the Jews, and shows the superiority of their felicity, so long as they were obedient, to that of the Romans.

In the fifth book he describes the virtue of the old Romans, and what reward was given to it here on earth—shadowy reward for shadowy virtue. He gives an excellent account of the vice of vain-glory, and contrasts it with the humility of Christians. He demonstrates that it was the true God who dispensed his mercies and judgments toward the Romans. A more striking view of the emptiness of warlike grandeur cannot be found, than in the account which he gives of the condition of the victors and the vanquished, and in the demonstration that the latter were no way inferior to the former in point of real happiness, except in the crisis of battle.

Book 5th.

In the same book he argues against Cicero, and shows the consistency of the prescience of God with the free agency of man. In this and some other parts of his works, the discerning reader may see some traces of that ingenious work, Jonathan Edwards's Enquiry on Free-will. He takes notice of the total defeat sustained by Rhadagasius, the barbarous Pagan, in Italy, and reminds the Gentiles how insultingly they had declared, beforehand, that he would certainly be victorious. His observations on the ill success of the pious emperor Gratian, and the prosperity of Constantine and Theodosius, deserve also our attention.

Having shown, in the first five books, that Paganism could do nothing for men in temporal things, in the five following books he proves, that it was also totally insignificant with respect to the next life.* Here we meet with some valuable fragments of the very learned Varro, who divides religion into three kinds, the fabulous, the philosophical, and the political. Here too we have a clear and historical detail of the opinions of the ancient philosophers.†

Five following Books.

Of the remaining books, the four first describe the be-

* Book vi. [redacted] Book viii.

ginning, the four middle the progress, and the four last the issues of the two states, namely, the City of God and the World; the history of both, and the different genius and spirit of each, are throughout conceived with great energy by the author, and are illustrated with copiousness and perspicuity.

The eleventh book begins with a just and solid view of the knowledge of God by the Mediator, and the authority of the Scriptures. A number of questions, which respect the beginnings of things, rather curious than important, follow. Among these there is, in the twelfth chapter, an occasional comparison of the felicity of the just in this life with that of Adam before his fall, which deserves a better character. His metaphysics concerning the origin of evil are interspersed. But the greater part of the book may be omitted with little loss to the reader. Yet his censure of Origen in the twenty-third chapter deserves attention. Book 11th. Origen censured.

In the twelfth book the question concerning the origin of evil is still more explicitly stated; and the opinions of those who pretend to account for the origin of the world in a manner different from the Scriptures, and to give it an antiquity much superior to that which is assigned to it in them, are refuted. Book 12th.

The thirteenth book describes the fall of man; but questions of little or no moment are interspersed; and the subtilty of the learning of his times, meeting with his argumentative mind, leads him here, as in various other parts of his writings, into trifling disquisitions. I do not, however, reckon of this sort his account of the difference between an animal and spiritual body, because it throws some good light on the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Book 13th.

The fourteenth book contains matter more interesting than the foregoing three, though it is not without unimportant speculations. A just idea of the magnitude of the first sin is given, and the justice of God is excellently vindicated. In the close of this book he contrasts the two states in a very graphical manner. "Two sets of affections have produced two states: self-love produced an earthly one to the [c. 28.] Book 14th.

contempt of God; the love of God produced a heavenly one to the contempt of man. That glories in man, this in the Lord. That seeks glory from men, to this, God, the witness of the conscience, is the greatest glory. That exalts the head in its own glory, this says to its God, THOU ART MY GLORY, AND THE LIFTER UP OF MY HEAD. In that the lust of power reigns, in this men serve one another in love, governors in providing, subjects in obeying. That loves its own strength, this says to its God, I will LOVE THEE, O LORD, MY STRENGTH. In that, wise men live according to man, and pursue the goods of body or mind, or both, or if they know God, honour him not as God, nor are thankful.—In this, human wisdom is of no account, godliness is all, in which the true God is worshipped, and the reward is expected, in the society of saints and angels, that God may be all in all."

In the fifteenth book, he enters upon the second part of the history of the two states, namely, their progress. He describes very justly the two types, Sarah and Agar, and illustrates the spirit and genius of the two sects by the cases of Cain and Abel. He confutes those who would make the lives of the Antediluvians of shorter duration than that assigned them in Scripture. His reflections on the ark and the Deluge are just, though to us they contain little that is new; and in the last chapter he shows that the literal and allegorical sense of Scripture ought both to be supported, without depreciating either.

Book 15th.

The sixteenth book carries on the history of the city of God from Noah to David, and contains important instruction throughout, especially to those who have not read the same things in modern authors.

Book 16th.

The seventeenth book may be called the prophetic history. He shows a double sense must necessarily be affixed to the words of the prophets, in which sometimes the literal, sometimes the spiritual, and sometimes both senses are applicable. He justly observes, therefore, that the Scriptures are to be understood in a tripartite sense. And he gives an admirable instance of his views in Hannah's song in the first book of Samuel, in which a king is prophesied of, at a time when no king was in Israel. His comments on the Psalms are excellent also to

Book 17th.

the same purpose. These views are so remote from the usual mode of reasoning in our times, that they will not easily find credit in the world. But I will venture to affirm, that the more men study the Scriptures, the more they will see the justness of Augustine's remarks, and the necessity of admitting them.

In the eighteenth book he displays much learning in describing the times of the world coeval with those of the church of God, prior to the birth of Christ. He proves the superior antiquity of prophetic authority to that of any philosophers. The remarkable harmony of the sacred writers, in the promotion of one system, and the endless discordancies of philosophers, are ably contrasted. Yet he proves from the earliest times, that the citizens of the new Jerusalem were not confined absolutely to Jewry. Book 18th.

In speaking of the times of Christ and the propagation of the Gospel, he observes,* "In this malignant world, in these evil days, whilst the church is procuring future dignity by present humility, and is disciplined by the incentives of fear, the torments of pain, the fatigue of labours, and the dangers of temptations, rejoicing only in hope, when her joy is sound, many reprobates are mixed with the good; both are collected into the Gospel-net, and both, included in this world as in a sea, swim promiscuously till they reach the shore, where the bad shall be severed from the good, and in the good, as in his temple, God shall be all in all." —"Christ chose disciples meanly born, obscure and illiterate, that whatever great things they should do, he might be in them, and do all. One he had among them, whose evil he turned to good, by making it an instrument of his passion, and affording an example to his church of enduring evil. His holy church being planted, so far as his bodily presence required, he suffered, died, rose again, showing by his passion what we ought to sustain for truth, by his resurrection what to hope for in eternity; and this is an additional lesson to the great mystery of redemption, by which his blood was shed for the remission of our sins." He proves that the faith of the Gospel is strengthened by the dissensions of heretics; and after some observations on Antichrist, as just as might be expected in his time, he concludes

* Chap. xlix.

with a remark on a Pagan prophecy, which affirmed that the Christian religion would only continue three hundred and sixty-five years. "What may be doing, says he, at the end of this period in other parts of the world, [c. 54.] it may be needless to inquire. I will mention what I know; in the renowned city of Carthage, the imperial officers, in the year following the predicted extinction of Christianity, overturned the temples of the idols, and brake the images. And for the space of thirty years since that time, the falsity of the Pagan divination being notorious, occasion hath been given to render the progress of the Gospel still more triumphant."

The four last books describe the issues of the two states. The nineteenth deserves the studious attention of every scholar, who would accurately distinguish between theology and philosophy. He contrasts the Book 19th. ideas of happiness exhibited by both with great clearness, and, while he does justice to all the good that is found in secular systems, he points out their fundamental errors. The principles of evangelical virtue are stated; the miseries of life are described, and both the true relief against them which the Gospel proposes is exhibited, and the false consolations of philosophy are justly exposed. In fine (for my limits admit not a longer detail) the reader will find here the mass of secular philosophy reduced to order, its errors detected, and the very picture of the Christian state and genius delineated.

The twentieth book undertakes to describe the last judgment. But as the vigorous and discursive genius of the author led him to handle a multitude of intricate Book 20th. questions, and to undertake the exposition of some of the most difficult prophecies in the Scripture, for which the early times in which he lived were unequal, through want of the evidence of their accomplishment, almost the whole is very uninteresting.

In the two last books he gives his ideas of the punishment of the wicked, and of the happiness of the righteous in a future state. The former, though it has a Former of the two last books. mixture of curious questions, more subtle than important, will from the eleventh chapter to the end deserve a careful perusal. I have not seen, in so small

a compass, a sounder answer to the objections of men against the divine justice in punishing sin eternally, than is to be found in the eleventh and twelfth chapters. It appears that the Lord's prayer was daily used by the church * in his time, and though he seems to give an unsound interpretation of our Lord's words, of making FRIENDS OF THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, yet he confesses that his interpretation would be dangerous in practice; and he protests against the ideas of those who imagine they can atone for their sins by alms. He refutes various presumptions of men who expect to escape the damnation of hell without a sound conversion.

In the last book, which describes the eternal rest of the city of God, he dwells a little on the external evidences of Christianity, and in speaking of miracles, he describes some which were wrought in his own time. One of them, the healing of a disorder, seems peculiarly striking, because it was in answer to prayer. I have again to regret the scholastic and subtle taste of his times, interwoven with most important matter. The twenty-second chapter gives as striking a proof, drawn from facts, of human apostacy as I have seen. The reflections in the two next chapters are also admirable. And he closes with a delightful view of the eternal felicity of the church of God.

Last Book.

Should the very imperfect sketch I have given of this work, one of the greatest efforts of genius and learning in any age, induce any classical scholars to peruse it with candour and attention, and by the blessing of God to imbibe some portion of the heavenly spirit of the author, I shall have cause to rejoice. One caution I must however give in reading it, which, indeed, is generally necessary in reading the Fathers, and it is that which I would keep steadily in view throughout this history. We must forget our OWN times, spirit, taste, and manner: We must transplant ourselves into those of the author, and make allowances for his modes both of thinking and speaking, which are extremely different from our own. Without this reasonable degree of candour, to which, however, few minds are sufficiently inclined, it is impossible to make a just estimate of the works which pass under our examination.

* Chap. last.

CHAP. VI.

AUGUSTINE'S CONDUCT TOWARD THE DONATISTS.

THE active spirit of the bishop of Hippo found sufficient employment in his long course of private and public labours against the Pelagians, the Manichees, and the Donatists, besides the general care of the African churches, and the peculiar inspection of his own diocese. The two former sects he in a manner eradicated: his own experience in religion fitted him for the work. The last sect he opposed with much success. Vital godliness, it is true, is not so much interested in this opposition, nor does his conduct here merit in all respects that praise in regard to them, which it does in regard to the others.

Let us distinguish the Donatists as they ought to be. Some of them were, comparatively speaking, a mild and peaceable people; others, called the CIRCUMCELLIONES,* were a mere banditti, sons of violence and bloodshed, who neither valued their own lives, nor those of their neighbours, and frequently were remarkable for committing suicide in a fit of frenzy.† They had a peculiar malice against the pastors of the general church, and way-laid them, from time to time, attacked them with armed force, and mutilated, or even killed them.‡ They burnt the houses of those who would not comply with their sect, and were guilty of many detestable enormities. Augustine himself was several times way-laid by these miserable men, and once by a peculiar providence, through the mistake of his guide, was led into a different road from that by which he had intended to travel, when he was going through one of his usual visitations of his diocese; a work which he was wont to discharge with frequency and labour. He learnt afterwards, that by this means he had escaped an ambush which they had laid for him.

There was nothing peculiarly doctrinal in the whole scheme of the Donatists: they differed from the general church only concerning a matter of fact, namely, whether Cæcilian had been legally ordained. Augustine justly observes in his controversy with them, that, if their oppo-

* [Augustin. contra ep. Parmen. Lib. i. c. 11.] † [Augustin. ep. 88.]
[‡ Possid. in vit Augustin. c. 10 and 12.]

nents had been mistaken,* such a circumstance justified not at all their separation from the general church, since Jesus Christ, his grace and doctrine, remained the same. Yet for such a trifle, even from the close of the third century to this which is before us, did these schismatics think it worth while to rend the body of Christ, when the articles of belief were the same in both parties. So much had men forgotten to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace! The peaceable Donatists abhorred the madness of the Circumcelliones, and yet had not the discernment to see and lament the evils which their own needless schisms had occasioned. They themselves were crumbled into parties, and subdivided into little bodies which condemned one another; each arrogating to itself the title of the true church, while they all joined to condemn the general church. In the mean time they were extremely active in re-baptizing multitudes in Africa; for the baptism of the general church was not by them allowed to be valid.

Augustine owns, concerning one party of them, the Rogatians, that they carefully distinguished themselves from the Circumcelliones. Whether the rest did so, is not so evident. This may be safely affirmed, that all truly humble and godly persons of the Donatist name (and I hope there were many such in Africa) must have separated themselves from them entirely. But it was very difficult for others to make the just distinction; Africa was full of these schismatics, and the furious party were undoubtedly very numerous. Let us briefly state the methods used by Augustine with respect to this people.

At first, when he saw the vast numbers of them with which Africa swarmed, his heart was struck with horror at the thought of exposing them to the penal laws of the empire; and he wrote to the Imperial court his sentiments and wishes, which were, that the lawless and savage conduct of the Circumcelliones might be restrained by the civil sword, but that no other arms should be used against the peaceable Donatists, than preaching and arguments; because, as he observed, compulsive conversions were not genuine, and tended only to harden men in sin.

Other bishops of the general church in Africa were not

* [Augustin. contra. Cresc. Don. Lib. 3. c. 72.]

so moderate; they desired that the civil restraints should be exercised on the whole Donatist name, and signified these sentiments to the Imperial court, at a time when their spirits were heated by the savage treatment of a certain bishop, who had fallen into the hands of the Circumcelliones, and was believed to have lost his life. Under the impression of this belief, on account of many enormities which had been practised by the banditti, the court issued orders for fines to be imposed on the Donatists, and banishment on their bishops. It was not till after these edicts were promulged, that it appeared, that the injured bishop had escaped with life. Augustine owns that he afterwards retracted his opinion, when he saw the good effects of the interposition of the civil magistrate. Many of the Circumcelliones, he observes, with much humility and joy confessed their error, and returned into the bosom of the church: numbers too, who had never joined in their enormities, and who had nothing to plead for their schism, but custom and tradition, and the shame of inconstancy, and the fear of molestation from the Circumcelliones, when they found themselves exposed to the laws for the defence of their schism, began to examine the grounds on which it stood, saw and confessed their error, and united themselves to the general church with every mark of serious repentance. Moved by these considerations, and convinced by the effects rather than the reason of the case, the bishop of Hippo repeatedly supported in his writings the justice and reasonableness of the imperial methods of opposing the Donatists.

It is certain, however, that he continued all the time extremely tender in his conscience concerning this subject. He repeatedly and earnestly pressed the magistates on no account to shed blood, and in all his writings and conduct on this occasion demonstrated, that he was led by principle, by the fear of God, and by a charitable compassion for the souls of men, in his contentions with the Donatists. I know it is not easy for men to believe this, who are themselves profane and careless, and with whom all sorts of religion are of equal value, because they are apt to measure others by themselves. Yet, whoever shall take pains to weigh the writings of Augustine, and to compare them with his practice and general temper, will feel an invincible

conviction, that I have not been betrayed into an excess of candour in forming this judgment. In truth, the case was mixed and complicated; one sort of conduct ought to have been held toward the furious, another toward the peaceable. But it was difficult to distinguish in real fact, though none in our times will doubt, that Augustine's first sentiments were more just than his second. He largely insists on the unreasonableness of the Donatists in confining the mercies of salvation to themselves, as if all the world had been unchristian, and Africa alone were possessed of the truth. And he observed, that their absurdity appeared still stronger in confining salvation to some particular spots of Africa, when they had subdivided themselves into little parties, each pretending to monopolize the truth. But then the general church should not have imitated this bigotry, in condemning the whole body of the Donatists. Highly culpable as these were in breaking the unity of the church, the peaceable part of them, who feared God, and wrought righteousness, should have been owned as brethren by the general church, and the furious alone should have been rejected as unchristian, and exposed to the civil law for their crimes. It was an erroneous notion of the unity of the church, and the dread of schism on the one hand, which led Augustine into the mistake; and it was an abuse of the right of conscience on the other, which seduced the Donatists.*

The bishop of Calama,† one of the disciples of Augustine,

* It would be equally tedious and uninteresting to take notice of the endless perversions with which Mr. Gibbon has filled the history of the church. A remark or two may be made, to guard those who read his History against his deceptions. In reading him (chap. xxxiii. Vol. iii. Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire) I was surprised to meet with two representations, for neither of which I could find any foundation in original records, both relating to these Donatists. The first is, that he ascribes the madness, and tumult, and bloodshed, of the Circumcelliones to the imperial persecutions in Augustine's time. I will not say how far these outrages might be increased by them; but the Donatists had ever been an unruly and turbulent sect. Their very origin was scandalous, and in Julian's time their furious conduct deserved the interference of the civil magistrate, Aug. ad Donat. Ep. 105. [Optat. l. ii. in Bibl. Patr. tom. 4. p. 450. &c. ed. Paris. 1610.] Fleury, vol. ii. b. xv. c. 32. His second account is still more glaringly false. He ascribes the success of the Vandals in Africa to the effect of the same prosecution of the Donatists, who, he supposes, joined the arms of Genseric against the general church. Of this no proof appears at all. He might as justly have ascribed the Pretender's invasion of Scotland, in the last rebellion, to the revival of godliness in Great Britain, which took place about the same time.

† [Possid. in vita Augustin. c. 12.]

going to visit his diocese, was attacked by the Circumcelliones, robbed, and so ill-treated, that he escaped with difficulty. Upon this, Crispinus the Donatist bishop of Calama, was fined by the magistrate according to the laws. He denied himself to be a Donatist, and the two bishops of Calama appeared in court, and pleaded before a great multitude, nor did Augustine refuse his assistance to the church on this occasion. The Donatist was convicted, and required to pay the fine. But the disciple of Augustine, satisfied with his victory, begged that the fine might be remitted, which request was granted accordingly. The pride of the Donatist refused to stoop, and he appealed to the Emperor, who ordered the law to be executed with the greatest rigour on the whole party. The bishops of the general church, however, with Augustine at their head, implored for them the imperial clemency, and were successful in their petition.

No doubt it would have been far more agreeable to the maxims of Christianity, had no methods but those of argument been employed against the Donatists. But the difficulties of the case have been stated; and the conduct of Augustine, and no doubt of other godly persons in Africa, was in general of a piece with the mild behaviour which they displayed on this occasion. Instances, however, of iniquitous and oppressive exactions from the peaceable Donatists would naturally take place, amidst the indignation of men's minds against the Circumcelliones. Nor is there any thing in all this which impeaches the acknowledged sincerity, meekness, and piety of the bishop of Hippo, notwithstanding the mistake of judgment, which happened to him in common with the whole church at that time. It is a delicate and difficult matter to settle, in all cases, how far the civil magistrate ought to interfere in religion. Different ages are apt to run into different extremes, as either superstition or profaneness predominates. Doubtless there is a middle path of rectitude in this subject, which I have endeavoured to describe on a former occasion, though, to apply it with exactness to all cases and circumstances would be difficult in itself, and foreign to the design of this history. Donatism, however, under the charitable and argumentative labours of Augustine, received a blow, from which it never

recovered, and the sect dwindled gradually into insignificance ; and the most pleasing part of the story is, that by the suppression of the Circumcelliones, the Ecclesiastical face of Africa must have been abundantly meliorated, and, in all probability, a great accession made to the real church of Christ.*

CHAP. VII.

THE REST OF AUGUSTINE'S WORKS REVIEWED.

THE two tracts on Lying, addressed to Consentius,† demonstrate the soundness of the author's views in morality. Such indeed is the connexion between one part of divine truth and another, that those who have the justest and the largest views of Gospel-grace, have always the most exact and extensive ideas of moral duty, and what is more, exemplify them in life and conversation. For the same self-righteousness, which tarnishes the lustre of divine grace, always induces its votary to curtail the demands of the divine law, to adulterate it with pride and the love of the world, and to render a thousand things allowable in practice, which an humble and holy soul must abhor. We have seen what vague and dangerous notions of veracity had begun to prevail during the progress of superstition, from which even such men as Ambrose and Chrysostom were not exempt ; and that what are called pious frauds had in some instances been esteemed laudable. Augustine in the treatise before us, defines lying to be " The saying of one thing and thinking of another ; " and in all cases, even for the most pious and salutary purposes, he excludes

Tracts on Lying.

* After examining Augustine's writings concerning the Donatists, particularly the letters 48, 50, 61, and 127 [or 43, 185, 204, and 100.] and the narrative of Possidonius, I have endeavoured to compress into this chapter the substance of the historical information which they contain, without troubling myself or the reader with particular citations. I have done on this occasion, what I profess to do generally, to the best of my ability, namely, formed my judgment on original evidences, and not on the opinions and reasonings of any modern whatever. Laborious task ! compared with the ease of copying other historians ; invidious also, because it often obliges one to correct modern representations ! But it is the task of a real historian.

† [The Benedictine editors tell us that the first of these tracts, is not in the Manuscripts *addressed to Consentius*, and therefore should not be in the printed copies.]

lying as unchristian. The second chapter of the epistle to the Galatians had been perversely interpreted in that part of it which relates to the dissimulation of Peter.* He rescues the divine oracles from the abuse, and demonstrates from the most express and determinate decisions of the New Testament, that all deceit of the tongue is wicked. The task was worthy of him who was the principal instrument of the revival of godliness in the church.†

His treatise on faith and works was written to obviate the Antinomianism, which some were in his time desirous of introducing. Men, who still persevered in their sins, desired to be baptized; and there were those who supported their unreasonable wishes, and thought it sufficient to teach them, after baptism, how they ought to live, still holding out a hope to their minds, that they might be saved as by fire, because they had been baptized, though they never repented of their sins. In answer to these dangerous abuses, our author shows, that the true saving faith works by love, that the instruction of catechumens includes morals, as well as doctrines; that the labour of catechizing is exceedingly profitable to the church, and that persons ought to be catechized before they receive baptism, that they may know how vain it is to think of being eternally saved without holiness. He justly observes,‡ that the eunuch's answer to Philip, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," virtually and radically involved in it,

Augustine on Faith.

* Aug. Opera, tom. 4. page 2. Paris edition 1571, [or tom. 8. p. 1763. ed. Ven. 4to.]

† In this chapter, the other works of Augustine, which have not fallen under our consideration in the preceding Chapters, are considered, so far as I think them worthy of the reader's particular attention. Those parts of his voluminous writings, which are either mere repetitions of what has been elsewhere illustrated, or seem not to convey any interesting instruction, or handle subjects which have been much better treated by those who have had the advantage of later improvements, are omitted.—The book of Meditations, though more known to English readers than any other of the works ascribed to Augustine, on account of the translation of it into our language by Stanhope, seems not to be his, both on account of its style, which is sententious, concise, abrupt, and void of any of those classical elegancies, which now and then appear in our author's genuine writings, and also on account of the prayers to deceased saints which it contains. This last circumstance peculiarly marks it to have been of a later date than the age of Augustine. Frauds of this kind were commonly practised on the works of the Fathers in the monastic times. For the most part, however, this book may be read with profit by the serious reader, because of the devotional spirit in which it resembles the genuine works of Augustine.

‡ [Lib. de Fide et op. c. 9.]

a knowledge of the true character of the person and offices of Christ, and of the qualities which belong to his members. He supports his doctrine by Scripture authority, particularly by that of St. James in his second chapter; and against those who say, that they would believe in Christ and come to him, and are hindered, he observes, "We do not prohibit such as are willing,* from coming to Christ, but we prove by their own practice that they are not willing to come to Christ; nor do we forbid them to believe in Christ, but demonstrate that they are not willing to believe in Christ, who suppose that adulterers can be his members." On the whole, he reprobates the most dangerous notion of the possibility of baptized persons being saved in their sins, and recommends strongly an attention to church-discipline, and to the wholesome practice of catechizing, showing through the whole a zeal for the cause of holiness, and a fear of men's abusing the doctrines of grace.†

In a small treatise to Simplician, the aged bishop of Milan, who was both the instructor and the successor of Ambrose, he undertakes to solve the difficulties usually grounded on the ninth chapter to the Romans. And he defends the doctrine of divine grace in his usual manner. His remarks on 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' will deserve to be transcribed. "It is not said, it is not of him that is unwilling and despises, but of God who hardens. —Nothing is done by God to make men worse; only that is not bestowed by him upon some men, which might make them better. Since human society is connected by giving and receiving, who does not see, that no man is accused of iniquity, who exacts what is due to himself, or remits the same? This idea of equity is impressed on us by the Divinity. All men die in Adam, being one mass of iniquity: this death may be called a debt due to Divine Justice, which, whether it be exacted, as with some, or remitted, as with others, there is no iniquity."‡ Treatise to Simplician.

The treatise on catechising the ignorant deserves to be read, both for the solid and pious vein of instruction which runs through it, and also for the light On Catechising.

* [Lib. de Fide et Op. c. 17.] † Id. [c. 27.]
‡ [De diversis quæst. ad Simplic. Quæst. 2. s. 12—17.]

which it throws on the customs of the church. It appears, that whoever desired to be admitted into the church, was obliged to attend the catechist; and the work, in our author's manner of practising it, was very important. The person to whom he writes, had expressed a concern, because he could not please himself in his manner of speaking. Augustine observes, that this may easily happen, even when there is no particular fault in our manner of exhorting. He owns that it was generally the case with himself. And that the reason is, the mind of a serious preacher or catechist conceiving in one glance a beauty and weight in his subject, to express which his words are too slow or inadequate, he feels ashamed and disappointed; yet, continues Augustine, he ought not to conclude, that his words are lost, or that they appear as mean to the hearers, as they do to himself. "We see," says he, "but in a glass darkly, and we must patiently labour to make greater improvement in divine life. Yet it is desirable to catechise with a cheerful spirit and with sensible comfort in one's own mind. This, however, is the gift of God."

In the method of catechising, he recommends to begin with narration, to give to the pupils a clear and succinct view of the great facts, relative to our religion, both in the Old and New Testament, and to dwell more largely on the more important, and only glance at those which are less so. In the whole manner of doing this, the teacher should have his eyes steadily fixed on the great end, LOVE, and refer every thing, which he relates, to the plan of divine love in the gift of Jesus Christ, describing the fall and the redemption, and the method of God in winning back the apostate spirits of men to love him, in return for his free love to us in Jesus Christ. Yet he observes, that without fear of Divine wrath, there can be no motive for sinners to approach to the God of love, or any sufficient inducements to engage their minds to seek him. Nor should the catechist be too shy in conveying his instructions, because the catechumen's motives may be merely worldly. It often happens, says he, through the mercy of God, that he, who applied to us for instruction with carnal views, is brought to feel the value of that, of which at first he only made pretence. But it would be useful, if the catechist could know before-

hand what was the frame of the catechumen. If he cannot, he must interrogate him himself, and regulate his discourse by the answers he receives. If the catechumen owns, that fear of Divine wrath for sin, or the terror of some powerful awakening admonition from God, has led him to apply for information, the catechist has then the fairest opening for instruction.

When he has finished his narration, he should add exhortation, laying open the hope of resurrection, and the awful views of divine judgment, of heaven and hell. He should arm the catechumen against the scandals and temptations to which he may be exposed from the perverseness of heretics, the malice of open enemies, or the evil lives of nominal Christians. And he is particularly to be directed, amidst all the precepts given him how to please God and live a holy life, not to trust in any of his works, but in the grace of God alone.

If the person has had a liberal education, he must not be offended by a tedious and diffusive view of things respecting the facts of Christianity, though a fuller display of the same facts will be needful for the unlearned. The discourse must be varied; it will be necessary in some things to be more large, as in others to be more brief. For instance, in guarding him against the pride of learning, and in forming his taste, he will need to be seriously instructed to avoid faults of a moral rather than those of a literary nature, and to dread the want of grace in his words and deeds, rather than a solecism or barbarism in language, and to take particular care not to despise illiterate Christians.

He had already hinted at one discouragement with which the catechist is apt to be affected. Another is, that whereas he would rather himself read or hear things useful for his own improvement, he is obliged repeatedly to have recourse to things, which to himself are now no longer necessary. No doubt this is one cause in all ages, why so few love the office of instructing the ignorant. Those who themselves are ignorant, are not fit to instruct, and those who are knowing, are apt to be above the task. A pastor, he observes, is engaged in some agreeable study, and is told that he must proceed to catechise. He is vexed, that the course of his

work is interrupted, and from the agitation of his mind, is less fitted to discharge the work itself.

Hence, he concludes, it is necessary that the teacher should himself learn those things, which may exhilarate his own mind: for God loveth a cheerful giver. He adds, that the meek and charitable example of the Son of God should to this end be placed before him, to shame him out of his pride and impatience; that if indeed we have any more useful study to prosecute, respecting ourselves, we may then expect that God will speak to us in it more powerfully, when we have undertaken cheerfully to speak for him as well as we could to others; and that the tediousness of that trite and plain road of catechising should be smoothed by divine love in the heart; and that when we consider that we are poor judges of the best order of things, and how much better it is to leave the direction of times and seasons with the all-wise God, we shall not take it amiss, that the providential calls of duty disturbed the order which we had prescribed to ourselves, and that, in short, his will took place before ours.

In interrogating the catechumen, he is to be asked, whether he means to be a Christian for the sake of this life or the next. And one of the most important cautions to be given him is, that he desire to be a Christian solely on account of eternity.

He concludes with the form of a catechetical instruction, which is itself no mean sermon, comprehending the very essentials of the Gospel salvation by Jesus Christ through faith,* the most important doctrines connected with the most material Christian duties. But enough of this subject: let those pastors, with whom religion is mere form, read and blush, and learn and imitate.

In his treatise on Patience,† he is solicitous to show that its origin is from divine grace, and that it is a virtue, in its whole nature, distinct from any thing seemingly resembling it, which may arise from natural resources. To pave the way to an illustration of this thought, he starts an objection, natural enough to an infidel mind:

Treatise on Patience.

[c. 16.] "If men, to gratify their secular desires, can without divine grace, by the mere strength of nature, endure patiently the greatest hardships, why may

* [De catechizand. rud. c. 26. s. 52.] † [De Patientiâ tom. 8. p. 1879.]

not men by the same strength endure afflictions through the love of eternal life?" In answer to this, he observes, that the stronger men's desires are after worldly things, the more firmly and resolutely will they endure hardships to obtain the gratification of their selfish [c. 17.] desires, whether riches, praise, or whatever else. In like manner, the more sincerely they love heavenly things, the more cheerfully will they endure what they are called to suffer on their account. Now worldly desire originates from the human will, is strengthened by the delight which the mind takes in worldly objects, and is confirmed by custom. But the love of God has no such origin; it is not from ourselves, it is altogether by the Holy Ghost given to us. And he goes on to show, that electing grace, not in consequence of any works of man, but previous to them all, while he is ungodly and without strength, chooses him to salvation, and bestows on him the whole power to will and to do, and is itself the first and decisive source of all the good which he does, which good is all along assisted, supported, and maintained to the end, and at length rewarded hereafter.

It is not in commenting on the Scriptures, that the peculiar excellences of Augustine appear. The fanciful mode of Origen vitiated the whole plan of exposition, from his days to the Reformation. Yet, Augustine has far less of it, and enters more precisely into the sacred oracles than most of the fathers of his time; but he does this better in expounding a particular point of doctrine, which he has before him, than in any of his orderly comments. His exposition of the Psalms is full of pious sentiments, and he breaks out from time to time into beautiful and pathetic observations. He sees Christ everywhere in the Psalms, though he is not always happy in his manner of expounding the passages. On his exposition of St. John's Gospel, similar observations may be made. It cannot, however, be denied, that extremely imperfect as his expositions are, they have been highly useful to the church, because the lights which they contained were not only beneficial to pious men in the dark ages, but afforded also much assistance to the Reformers, when a more judicious and intelligent vein of interpretation took place.

His treatise on Christian doctrine* deserves to be perused throughout by young ministers; for the purpose of forming the taste and directing the manner, as well as enlightening the understanding, and warming the heart of him who undertakes to instruct mankind. As a preacher, Augustine doubtless excelled; but his excellence lay in exhibiting that which was useful to the vulgar, not that which was entertaining to the learned. Perhaps, in no age was the pastoral taste more depraved, than it is in the present. A highly finished, elaborate and elegant style, is looked on as the perfection of a Christian speaker; and the manner, rather than the matter, is the chief object. It is not considered, that an artificial and polished arrrangement of sentences is lost on a vulgar audience; and those who affect it, are, it is to be feared, little moved themselves with the importance of divine things, and are far more solicitous for their own character as speakers, than for the spiritual profit of their hearers. Yet in no age did God Almighty ever more clearly show, by the effects, what was agreeable in his sight. What a number of learned and elaborate sermons have been preached to no purpose! even the truth of the doctrine that is in them is rendered, in a great measure, useless by the wisdom of words, with which it has been clothed: While plain artless colloquial addresses to the populace, by men fearing God, and speaking of divine things in fervour and charity, have been attended with DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER, and souls have been rescued, through their means, from sin and Satan. Classical and ornamental knowledge is not the first thing to be aimed at by a pastor. If he is yet very young, his time indeed is laudably employed in cultivating his faculties in this respect. And if his genius for eloquence be strong and acute, he will soon learn the justest rules sufficiently for the purpose of his profession. There is indeed an eloquence in the Scriptures, but it is an eloquence adapted to the subject, plainly divine. A pastor who has talents for speaking, attended with superior learning and endowments, will study to attain "a diligent negligence," that he may never overshoot the capacities of his audience, either by refined reasonings or by artificial ele-

Treatise on Christian Doctrine.

* Tom. iii. beginning.

gances of diction. Plain, downright, above all things perspicuous and intelligible, without being rude or clownish, he will descend to the lowest comprehension of his audience; and his grandeur and sublimity will appear in things, not in words. He will gladly give up his reputation to the fastidiousness of critics; for he has souls to bring into Christ's fold, and is not solicitous of the praise of men. He will show, without designing it, from time to time, that he CAN speak more elaborately, and more elegantly; but eloquence will follow his subject, not go before it. This will be the plan of a man of genius and learning in the work of the pulpit: he will humble himself, that Christ may be exalted. But Christ can do his work by workmen of slower and more ordinary capacities, and he often has done so.*

I have not wandered from the subject of CHRISTIAN doctrine, handled by Augustine. What I have mentioned are in a great measure his ideas. One important rule he adds, which, though plain to every serious mind, is too much

* Augustine knew how to practise his own rules of eloquence, and two instances related by himself show him, notwithstanding the defective taste of his age, to have been no mean orator. While he acted as a presbyter at Hippo, under Valerius his bishop, he was appointed by him to preach to the people, in order to reclaim them from riotous feasting on solemn days. He opened the Scriptures, and read to them the most vehement rebukes. He besought them by the ignominy and sorrow which they brought upon themselves, and by the blood of Christ, not to destroy themselves, to pity him who spake to them with so much affection, and to show some regard to their venerable old bishop, who, out of tenderness to them, had charged him to instruct them in the truth. "I did not make them weep,[1] says he, by first weeping over them, but while I was preaching, their tears prevented mine. Then I own I could not restrain myself. After we had wept together, I began to entertain great hope of their amendment." He now varied from the discourse he had prepared, because the present softness of their minds seemed to require something different. In fine, he had the satisfaction to find the evil redressed from that very day.

The other occasion was this,[2] "We must not imagine," says he, "that a man has spoken powerfully, when he receives much applause. This is sometimes given to low turns of wit, and merely ornamental eloquence. But the sublime overwhelms the mind with its vehemence, it strikes them dumb; it melts them into tears. When I endeavoured to persuade the people of Cæsarea to abolish their barbarous sports, in which, at a certain time of the year, they fought publicly for several days, I said what I could; but while I heard only their acclamations, I thought I had done nothing; when they wept, I entertained a hope that the horrible custom which they had received from their ancestors would be abolished.—It is now upwards of eight years since that time, and by the grace of God they have ever since been restrained from the practice." Here was true eloquence, and, what is of far more consequence, true piety in a preacher.

[1] Ep. 29. to Alypius.

[2] [Lib. iv. c. 24. s. 53.]

overlooked by many.* "Let our Christian orator," says he, "who would be understood and be heard with pleasure, pray before he speak. Let him lift up his thirsty soul to God, before he pronounce any thing. For, since there are many things which may be said, and many modes of saying the same thing, who knows, except he who knows the hearts of all men, what is most expedient to be said at the present hour? And who can cause us to speak what we ought, and as we ought, except he in whose hands we and our words are? And, by these means, he may learn all that is to be taught, and may acquire a faculty of speaking as becomes a pastor. At the hour itself of speaking, a faithful spirit will think his Lord's words adapted to his circumstances: 'Think not what or how ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.' If the Holy Spirit speak in those who are delivered up to persecutors for Christ, why not also in those who deliver Christ to learners? But, on the other side,† if any say, that men need to know no rules nor follow any studies, if the Holy Ghost make men teachers, it might be said also, men need not to pray, because our Lord saith, 'Your Father knoweth what ye have need of before ye ask him;' and at this rate the rules of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus might be superseded. Prayer and study therefore should go hand in hand; and the two epistles to Timothy and that to Titus are of standing authority in the church, and ought to be deeply meditated upon by every one who undertakes the office of a teacher."

The whole treatise deserves to be studied by junior pastors; the fourth book particularly; in the latter part of which he lays down the three sorts of style so judiciously described by Cicero, exemplifies them by Scripture instances, and instructs his young Christian orator how to adapt them to the nature of the subjects which lie before him.

Excellence of Book IV.

His treatise on the Trinity ‡ is very elaborate. Perhaps all that has ever been said in any age, in vindication and explanation of that great mystery, is contained in this book. It is in perfect unison with the expositions and sentiments of all the pious men who pre-

Augustine on the Trinity.

* B. iv. [c. 15. s. 32.] † [C. 16. s. 33.] ‡ Tom. 3. [or 11.]

ceded him, and particularly with the views of Novatian in his treatise on the same subject. Whether the writers were of the general church, or dissenters, they are perfectly unanimous in confessing the Trinity in unity, and in proving the doctrine from Scripture, and in leaving something after all inexplicable on the subject; but in a manner congruous to the incomprehensibility of the Divine essence. Augustine does full justice indeed to the argument, but it must be confessed, he goes too far; he loses both himself and his readers, by metaphysical subtilties and vain attempts to find analogies and similitudes, yet with a spirit so humble and cautious, as to separate carefully his conjectures from divine truth, and to leave the authority of Scripture unviolated. He, who has leisure, may peruse the whole work with profit. The humble and serious spirit of the author appears particularly in the several prefaces to its parts, and in the prayer at the close, an extract of which is as follows: * "O Lord our God, we believe in thee the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For the Truth would not have said, Go, baptize all nations, in the name, &c. if thou wert not a Trinity. Nor wouldest thou command us to be baptized in the name of him who is not God. I have sought thee, and examined and laboured much in composing this treatise. My God, my only hope, hear me, lest, through weariness, I cease to seek thee. Thou, who wilt be found, and hast given me increasing hope of finding thee, give me strength to seek thee. Before thee are my strength and my weakness. Preserve that and heal this. Before thee are my knowledge and ignorance. Where thou hast opened to me, uphold me, when I enter; where thou hast shut up, open to me when I knock. I would remember thee, understand thee, love thee. Augment in me these things, till thou perfectly form me anew. I know it is written, in the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin: but I would to God I spake only concerning thy word; and in praising thee, I should then do what is acceptable in thy sight, though I spake much. For thy Apostle would not have directed his son in the faith to preach the word, and to be instant in season,† out of season, were not this the case. Free me, O God, from the much inward speaking,

* [Lib. 15. c. 22.]

† 2 Tim. iv. 2.

which, while I fly to thy mercy, I feel in my miserable soul. For my thoughts are not silent when my tongue is. Many, alas! are my thoughts, which thou knowest to be vain. Grant me not to consent to them; and, if my nature delights in them, grant me to disapprove and not to dwell on them, even in a slumbering manner. Nor let them be so strong, as to proceed to any thing active; let my will, my conscience, be safe from them under thy defence. When we come to thee, many of those things we now say shall cease, and thou shalt remain alone all in all, and we shall without end say one thing, praising thee in one, being made one in thee. What is thine in these books, may thine acknowledge; if there be any thing of mine, may thou and thine forgive!"

Augustine's Sermons.

On Augustine's Sermons, I shall make only one remark. The reader would not think them to be the works of the learned and eloquent author of the City of God. But we must remember, that in them he was addressing, not scholars but the populace. They are plain and simple, but weighty and serious. He follows his own pastoral rules, and is himself the preacher he describes.

Amidst the many arduous and laborious employments of Augustine, in support of the doctrines of Christianity, and in the pastoral care, he yet found time to manage a large epistolary correspondence, a great part of which is preserved, and some specimens of it shall close this chapter.

Epistolary correspondence of Augustine.

The correspondence between him and the famous Jerome, the monk of Palestine, begins with the 8th, and ends with the 19th epistle. The principal subject of it was the reprehension of St. Peter by St. Paul, mentioned in the 2d chapter to the Galatians. Jerome, following the stream of the Greek expositors, who had gone before him, and who imitated the vicious mode of Origen, had asserted, that Paul could not seriously blame Peter for that which he had practised himself, in the circumcision of Timothy, and that, therefore, his rebuke of Peter was an officious lie, in which the two Apostles understood one another in private, and that the design was to deceive the people with a charitable view. Jerome,* it seems, carried his admiration of both

Jerome's sentiments.

* Tom. 2. from p. 9, to 19.

the Apostles to a superstitious excess, and could not bear to think of Peter being really found fault with for dissimulation. To maintain the honour of Peter, he is driven to undertake the vindication of deceit, when employed for a charitable purpose, and, what is worse, to fix the stain of a lie on a part of the revealed word of God, and to represent Paul, when writing by inspiration, as guilty of falsehood. Such mean and dangerous views attend superstition and self-righteous formality! I have not seen a practical case, which more evidently showed the low and declining state of godliness in these times.

Augustine, jealous of the honour of the divine word, and sensible of the danger of admitting falsehood, either into the books of inspiration, or into common life, with the same zeal that moved him to write against lying of all sorts, undertakes to clear up the subject, and, with great accuracy, explains the whole transaction, in the manner which we saw stated in the former volume.* Two essential points of Christianity are connected with his exposition, namely, the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ Jesus, and the duty of abstaining from deceit of the tongue of all kinds. All along, however, he treats the aged presbyter with a modesty becoming a junior.

Opposed by Augustine.

Jerome is chafed to find himself contradicted, defends his interpretation by the authority of Origen, its inventor, and seems to rebuke the daring spirit of Augustine, for venturing out of the common road, and advises him, if he burned with a strong desire of glory, rather to seek out some champion of his own age, with whom he might contend, than to molest him, who was a worn-out veteran. The angry monk seems to have measured the temper of the bishop of Hippo by his own. Learned as he undoubtedly was, he was still more distinguished for vain glory than for learning, and seems to have known too little of that sincere love of truth, which is connected with humility, the love of God, and the desire of leading souls to heaven, and is unmixed with all selfish considerations; a love which, doubtless, reigned in the breast of Augustine.

Jerome is displeased.

Augustine finding that he had, though without design, given offence, answered to this effect: † "In your letters

* Vol. i. p. 30.

† [Ep. 73. c. 1.]

Christian mildness and moderation of Augustine.

I find many proofs of your kindness, and some marks of your disgust. Far be it from me to be offended; I shall rather have reason to be thankful, if I be instructed and corrected by your correspondence. But, dearest brother, you would not think that I could be hurt by your answers, if you did not feel yourself hurt by my writings. As I cannot believe that you would think of hurting me unjustly, it remains that I own my fault, in having offended you by those letters, which I cannot deny to be mine. Why do I strive against the stream, and not rather ask pardon? I beseech you, therefore, by the gentleness of Christ, that if I have offended you, you would forgive; lest you be induced by hurting me in return, to render evil for evil." He goes on in a strain of mildness very uncommon among controversialists, and I observe nothing in the whole course of the debate, (which is far too long to quote,) that ought justly to give offence to Jerome. So unreasonably has our author been censured for heat and temerity, by writers who seem not to have been much acquainted with his works.* But these are faults vastly remote from Augustine, nor do I know any human author, ancient or modern, who dealt in controversy, so remarkably free from censoriousness and malignity. "I was much affected, says he, with the conclusion of your letter, in which you say, I wish I could embrace you, and by mutual conference teach or learn something. I say, for my part, I wish at least we lived nearer one another, that we might confer together more easily by letter. For I see there neither is nor can be so much knowledge of the Scriptures in me as in you. If I have any ability this way, I employ it in the service of God. Nor have I leisure, because of ecclesiastical occupations, to attend to more scriptural studies than those which relate to the pastoral care."

[c. 2. a. 3.]

[c. 2. a. 5.]

In the same letter he deeply laments the fierce quarrel which had arisen between Jerome and Ruffinus, and which, at that time, made a great noise in the Christian world. "I confess I was much affected, that so grievous a discord

* How delusive, and yet how common a thing is it, to form our idea of characters from the report of others, rather than from our own knowledge and careful investigation!

should arise between two such intimate friends, united in a bond of union, well known to almost all the churches. I saw in your letters what pains you took to moderate your anger. Wo to the world because of offences! Truly that scripture is fulfilled, Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. But why do I lament this of others, since I know not what I myself shall do? I may with difficulty, perhaps, know myself at present, but what I shall be hereafter I know not. While I am refreshed with your kind words, I am again stimulated with the keenest grief, to see two men, to whom God had given to suck the honey of his word together in the sweetest friendship, fall into such a state of virulent hostility. Woe is me, I would fall at your feet, I would weep as long as I could, I would entreat as much as my affections would permit, now each one for himself, now both for each other, and for others, and particularly the weak for whom Christ died, who now behold your animosities with great danger of hurt to themselves. But I tell you that my concern was really deep and strong, when I found you were really offended with me, and it has led me to be more prolix, perhaps, than I ought."

Quarrel between Jerome and Ruffinus. [c. 3. s. 6.]

[s. 8.]

[s. 9.]

This is a specimen not only of the moderate temper, but also of the ardent charity, which every where appears in the writings of this author. Jerome himself was moved, and begs that the debate might be closed on both sides. And he appears ever after to have both esteemed and loved Augustine.

The people of Madaura sent a person, named Florentinus, to Augustine, with a letter, desiring his assistance in some secular affair. The inhabitants of this place were as yet devoted to idolatry, and, through an insincerity very common with profane and careless minds, they addressed their epistle, "To Father Augustine, in the Lord, eternal salvation;" and closed it with these words, "We wish you, Sir, in God and his Christ, for many years to rejoice in your clergy." It behoved not him, who had written a book in defence of strict unequivocal truth in all things, to pass these compliments unnoticed. He tells the Madaurians * that he had, as far

Message to Augustine from the people of Madaura.

* Ep. 42, [or 232.]

as God permitted, attended to the business of Florentinus, [but in the first place he] exposes the inconsistency of such professions with their idolatrous practices. On the first sight of them he owns he was suddenly struck with a belief of their conversion, or at least with a hope, that they desired to be converted by his ministry. "I asked the bearer of your letter," says he, "whether ye were Christians, or desired so to be. By whose answer I was grieved, that the name of Christ was, to you, become an object of derision. For I could not think that there was any other Lord, except the Lord Christ, through whom a bishop could properly be called father. If ye wrote this with sincerity, what hinders you from seeking salvation in the same Lord, by whom ye salute us? If ye wrote thus with a jocose deceitfulness, do ye impose on me the care of your business, in such a manner that instead of extolling with due veneration, ye insult by your flattery, that NAME, through which I have power to do any thing for you? Dearest brethren, know that I speak this with inexpressible concern for you, believing that a rejection of my warning will aggravate your condemnation." He goes on to lay open briefly, but strongly, the evidences of Christianity: and then tells them, that "there is an invisible God, the creator of all things, whose greatness is unsearchable; that there is a person,* by whom the invisible Majesty is exhibited, the WORD, equal to him who begat him; and that there is a SANCTITY, the sanctifier of all things which are done in holiness, the inseparable and undivided communion of the invisible Deity and the Word. Who can look, with a serene and sincere mind, at this Being of beings, which I have laboured to express, though unable to exhibit with accuracy, and in beholding, forget himself, and obtain eternal salvation, unless, confessing his sins, he pull down all the mountains of his pride, and lower himself to receive God his teacher? Therefore the Word humbled himself, that we might more fear to be elated with the pride of man, than to be humbled after the example of God. Christ crucified is our object. Nothing is more potent than divine humi-

* I use the word Person, because I can scarcely otherwise express the author's meaning; but it is proper to tell the reader that there is nothing for it in the original.

lity.—I beseech you, if ye named Christ not in vain, in your epistle, that I may not have written this in vain. But if ye did it in unthinking gaiety of heart, fear him whom the subject world now expects as its Judge. The affection of my heart, expressed in this page, will be a witness at the day of judgment, to comfort you, if ye believe; to confound you, if ye remain in infidelity."

The Madaurians, I suppose, expected not such a letter. It deserved to be in part laid before the reader, as a proper example of the open, manly, affectionate method in which Christians should reply to unmeaning compliments, or polite dissimulation. Maximus, a grammarian, answered by a letter,* partly complimentary, partly satirical, the most specious sentiment of which is, that Pagans and Christians, all believing one God, mean much the same thing. Augustine,† in reply, gives him to understand, that the subject requires not levity, but seriousness, and that, by the help of the one living and true God, he will discuss these things more at large, when he shall perceive him to be in good earnest, giving him to understand, that the Christians in Madaura worshipped none but the living and true God.

A letter to Macedonius, concerning the road to true felicity,‡ deserves the serious perusal of every proud philosopher. Men who seek happiness from themselves, though Christians in form, are in effect, on the same plan as the ancient Stoics, whose proud pretences are justly ridiculed in this letter. Our author owns, that extreme torments would make life miserable, if the subject of them were destitute of hope, even though he were possessed of some virtues. He describes the way of felicity to lie through a course of humility, of faith, of the love of God and our neighbours, and of the hope of a future life of bliss. Letter to Macedonius.

In reply to Dioscorus,§ he justly guards him against the curious and presumptuous spirit of philosophizing, and dares to pronounce, in opposition to Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and several others of the fathers, that Christian piety needs not the assistance of secular instruction, but ought to depend solely on the Scriptures, and he cautions his friend against the pride of secular Reply to Dioscorus.

* Ep. 43. [or 16.] † [Ep. 44. or 17.] ‡ Ep. 52. [or 155.] § [Ep. 56. [or 118.]

learning, representing humility to be the first, the second, the third, the all in true religion, as Demosthenes said of delivery in oratory. Here is another point, in which we see the revival of apostolical truth in the West, by the grace of God, under the hand of Augustine.

In his letter to Proba, on prayer,* he gives a sound and judicious exposition of the Lord's prayer; and observes, that it is so full and comprehensive, that though a man may pray in other words, and those of great variety, yet every lawful subject of prayer may be reduced to one or other of the petitions which it contains. Proba was a rich widow, and had a numerous family; and when we consider the large extension and fashionableness of the monastic spirit at that time, it seems an instance of candour in Augustine, that he does not hint to her a word of advice to follow the custom of the religious in that age, but contents himself with directing her to serve God in her present station. He advises her to be a DESOLATE WIDOW† in her frame and spirit, looking for heavenly things, not earthly, and shows within how small a compass our prayers for temporal things ought to be confined.

Letter on prayer, to Proba.

As a remedy against much speaking in prayer, he advises to utter short and quick ejaculations, rather than long-continued petitions, if the mind be not in a fervent state; but if the spirit be intent and vigorous, the petitions, he thinks, may be prolonged without any danger of offending against our Lord's precept in the Sermon on the Mount. And he speaks in an instructive manner on the office of the Holy Spirit, as interceding for the saints with unutterable groanings. The great object in prayer, he observes, should constantly be, the enjoyment of God; and he adds, that however inadequate the believer's conceptions be, yet he has a distinct idea of his object; so distinct, that you can never impose on a real saint by offering him something else in the room of it. He knows what he wants, and he knows that this or that is not the thing which he wants. The whole epistle, if we except a few fanciful expositions, after the manner of Origen, is excellent, and breathes a superior spirit of godliness.

One Cornelius wishing to receive from him a consolatory

* Ep. 121. [or 130.] † 1 Tim. v. 5.

letter, on account of the loss of his wife,* Augustine, who knew that, notwithstanding this request, he lived in the excess of uncleanness, tells him, in allusion to the words of Cicero against Catiline, "I could wish to be gentle, I could wish in so great dangers, not to be negligent, but can a bishop patiently hear a man, who lives in sin, with greediness asking for a panegyric on his godly spouse, to mitigate his sadness on account of her decease?" He goes on to exhort him to repentance, with as much severity as might be expected from a faithful pastor of the mildest temper.

Consolatory letter to Cornelius.

In the close of a letter to Florentina,† he reminds her, "that though she had learned something salutary from him, yet she ought firmly to remember, that she must be taught by the inner Master of the inner man, who shows in the heart the truth of what is said, because neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth." While such views of divine teaching prevailed in the church, even all the ashes of superstition could not extinguish the fire of true godliness. It is the infelicity of our times, that not only the profane, but many serious persons are not a little irreverent in their ideas of spiritual illumination; and when I think of the miserable effects of this temper on the human mind, I am at a loss to determine whether I most dislike the childish superstitiousness of Augustine's age, or the proud pretensions to rationality of the present. To so much greater a degree has profaneness advanced under the latter than under the former.

Letter to Florentina.

The letter to Edicia‡ deserves to be attended to as characteristic of the taste of the times. This woman had, unknown to her husband, made a vow of perpetual continency. In so great reputation, however, were such practices at that time, that her husband consented afterwards to her resolution, and they still lived together, though he would not suffer her to assume the habit of a nun. Sometime after, two travelling monks imposed on her simplicity to such a degree, that she gave nearly all her property to them, though she had a son of her own by her husband. Augustine reminds her of St. Paul's direct-

Letter to Edicia.

* Ep. 125. [or 259.] † Ep. 132. [or 266.]
‡ Ep. 199. [or 262.]

tion, which she had broken : * and it is indeed observable, with what wisdom, even the most occasional rules of the divine word are delivered, as the breach of them is ever attended with mischievous consequences. He finds fault with her vow in the first place, because made without her husband's consent, and with her disposal of her property in the second place, for the same reason ; and, as the husband, incensed at her folly, had now fallen into libidinous practices, he teaches her to humble herself deeply before God, as having been a great instrument of his fall, and directs her to submit to her husband, to entreat his forgiveness, and to use every healing method in her power. The whole subject is an instance of piety and good sense, struggling, in the bishop of Hippo, against the torrent of absurdity and fashionable superstition.

At Calama, a colony in Africa, the Pagan interest seems to have much predominated ; so that, notwithstanding the imperial laws inhibiting their public rites, the party performed a religious solemnity in the city, and came with a crowd of dancers before the church. The clergy endeavouring to prevent this, the church was attacked with stones. The insult was repeated, and Christians found themselves unable to obtain justice. Their buildings were burned and plundered, one Christian was killed, and the bishop was obliged to hide himself. And so deep-rooted was the prejudice of the colony against Christianity, that the magistrates and men of rank chose to be tame spectators of these enormities. One person alone, a stranger, but, as it seems, a character of great influence, interposed, saved many Christians, whose lives had been in imminent danger, and recovered much of their property which had been plundered ; whence Augustine justly concludes,† how easily the whole mischief might have been checked, had the magistrates done their duty. Nectarius, a Pagan of the place, wrote a neat and genteel letter to the bishop of Hippo, begging his interest with the reigning powers to prevent, as much as possible, the punishment of the guilty. Augustine states to him the facts, as above, and appeals to his conscience, whether it was possible or right for government to overlook such crimes. He shows, that Christians lived in peace and

* 1 Cor. vii. 5. † Ep. 202. [or 91.]

good will toward all men, and that he would do the best he could to procure such a temperature of justice and mercy, as might prevent the repetition of these evils, and induce Pagans to take care of their best interests. He tells him, that he himself had been at Calama lately, and had taken occasion to warn them of the danger of their souls. They heard his exhortation, and entreated his interest. "But God forbid," says he, "that it should be any pleasure to me to be supplicated by those who refuse to supplicate our Lord." As Nectarius himself had spoken of his love to his country, Augustine is not sparing in his admonitions to him, to seek an acquaintance with a heavenly country; and preaches to him the truth and excellence of the Gospel, as well as exposes, in his usual manner, the futility of Paganism.

CHAP. VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS CONCERNING AUGUSTINE.

I HAVE comprised, in several distinct chapters, a variety of matter relating to the bishop of Hippo, for the sake of perspicuity; two more chapters must be added, one containing various articles of his life and conduct, including the account of his death; and the other, a view of his theological character. It is not in my power to gratify the reader with any thing like a regular history of the effusion of the Spirit of God, which took place toward the end of the last, and in the beginning of this century. We have a far more particular account of Augustine's literary works, than of his ministerial. On the whole, however, some genuine information may be collected, concerning the great work of God in his day.

The Manichees could not fail to attract a considerable portion of his attention; he had himself suffered extremely through their means; they abounded in Africa, and God abundantly blessed his labours in opposing their doctrines, and in recovering souls which had been seduced. One instance, to the honour of divine grace, deserves to be recorded in the very words of the writer.* "Not only I (Possidonius) who write this life, but also other brethren, who lived

* Possid. in vitâ Augustin. [c. 15.]

together with the bishop in Hippo, know that he once said to us, being at table together: 'Did you take notice of my sermon to-day in the church, that its beginning and end were not according to my custom; that I did not finish what I proposed, but left my subject in suspense?' We answered, we were at the time astonished, and now recollected it. 'I believe,' said he, 'the reason was, because the Lord, perhaps, intended some erroneous person in the congregation, through my forgetfulness and mistake, to be taught and healed; for, in his hand are we and our discourses. For, while I was handling the points of the question proposed, I was led into a digression, and so, without concluding or explaining the subject in hand, I terminated the argument rather against Manicheism, on which I had no design to have spoken a word, than concerning the matter proposed.' Next day, or two days after, so far as I can remember, came a merchant, called Firmus, and while Augustine was sitting in the monastery, in our presence, he threw himself at his feet, shedding tears, entreating his and our prayers, and confessing that he had lived many years a Manichee; that he had vainly spent much money in the support of that sect, and that, by the bishop's discourses, he had, through divine mercy, been lately convinced of his error, and restored to the church. Augustine and we inquired by what sermon in particular he had been convinced; he informed us; and as we all recollected the substance of that discourse, we admired, and were astonished at the profound counsel of God for the salvation of souls; and we glorified and blessed his holy name, who, when, whence, and as he pleases, by persons knowing and unknowing, works out the salvation of men. From that time, the man, devoting himself to God, gave up his business, and, improving in piety, was by the will of God compelled against his own will, in another region, to receive the office of Presbyter, preserving still the same sanctity; and, perhaps, he is yet alive beyond sea."

Augustine detected also the base and blasphemous practices of the Manichees,* and thus guarded the minds of the unwary. One of them, by name Felix, coming to Hippo to sow his sentiments, Augustine held a public dispute with

* [Possid. in vit. Augustin. c. 16.]

him in the church, and, after the second or third conference, Felix owned himself convinced, and received the Gospel.

Arianism * also being introduced into Africa by the Goths, who professed it, engaged the attention of Augustine, and he exerted himself in a controversy with Maximinus their bishop.

Of his labours against Pelagianism it will now only be needful to say,† that he lived to see the fruit of them in the growth of Christian purity, both in his own church and in other parts of Africa.

While he thus endeavoured to promote the cause of piety, he was always observed to bear, with much patience and meekness, the irregularities of the perverse, and to be more disposed to mourn over them with grief, than resent them with anger.

To the manifold labours of this bishop in preaching, visiting, and writing, was added the troublesome employment of hearing causes. For, according to the rules of 1 Cor. vi. the Christians of Hippo used to bring matters of controversy before the bishop.‡ And the examination and decision of these engaged him till the hour of repast, and sometimes he was employed in them fasting the whole day. Certainly it is not reasonable that a Christian pastor should be statedly employed in such things: but Augustine, following the customary practice of the time, made it subservient to the purest purposes. He had by this an opportunity of examining the dispositions of his people, and their improvements or defects in faith and good works; and he explained to them, occasionally, their duties as Christians, by opening to them the word of God, by exhorting them to piety, and by rebuking sinners: And in all this he acted with perfect disinterestedness.

In attendance on councils he was frequent, and in them he distinguished himself in the defence both of Christian doctrine and discipline.§ In ordaining clergymen, he took care to follow the custom of the church, and to act with the concurrence of the majority of the people.‖ His dress, furniture, and diet, were moderated between extremes; and it will deserve to be mentioned, as an instance of superiority

* [Possid. in vit. August. c. 17.] † Id. [c. 18.] ‡ [Id. c. 19.]
§ [Id. c. 21.] ‖ [Id. c. 22.]

to popular superstition, that he always drank wine, but with great moderation. He constantly practised hospitality; and at table encouraged reading or argument; and as his spirit, ever humble and tender since his conversion, could not bear the too fashionable mode of detraction and slander, he had a distich written on his table, which intimated, that whoever attacked the characters of the absent were to be excluded.* Nor was he content with a formal declaration; he seriously warned his guests to abstain from defamation. "On one occasion," says his biographer, "some bishops, his intimate friends, breaking the rule in conversation, he at length was so much roused as to say, that either those lines must be erased from the table, or he himself would rise from the midst of the meal, and go into his bedchamber; and of this I and others who were present are witnesses."

He was conscientiously attentive to the wants of the poor,
[c. 23.] and sedulously relieved them out of the revenues of the church, or the oblations of the faithful. And, in answer to the invidious complaints of some, concerning the riches amassed by the church, he freely offered to give them up to any of the laity who would take the charge of them. Doubtless the growth of superstition was even then bringing on that accession of wealth to the clergy, which afterwards grew to so enormous a height. But purer hands than those of Augustine never handled the possessions of the Church; he seems chargeable, even with inattention
[c. 24.] to his own rights; as he committed the whole of the temporals to his clergy in succession, and never made himself sufficiently acquainted with particulars, to be able, from his own inspection, to correct any mismanagement. He himself lived perfectly unconnected with the world, at one table, and in one house, with his clergy, and never purchased house or land. He checked also the fashionable method of men's leaving their possessions to the church, whenever he saw reason to think that the testators had near relations, who, in justice and equity, had a preferable claim. With much pleasure did he withdraw as soon

* Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,
Hanc mensam vetitam[1] noverit esse sibi.—Poss. in vit. Augustin.

[1] [Some MSS. read indignam instead of vetitam, and this is given in the text by the Benedictine editors.]

as possible from any secular cares which he had not been able to avoid, that he might give himself wholly to divine things. Hence he always remained, as much as possible, content with old buildings and utensils, lest he should be entangled with concerns of this nature. Yet to relieve the indigent, and to redeem captives, he scrupled not to sell the vessels of the church, after the example of Ambrose.

His abstinence from the society of women we should think, in our times, to have been carried beyond the due bounds: yet it hindered not his provident care for their spiritual welfare. [c. 26.]

A little before his death, he was employed in revising and correcting his works. This care produced the publication of his RETRACTATIONS, the chief use of which book is, that it enables us to fix, with a considerable degree of precision, what were his GENUINE works and thoughts. It pleased God, however, not to suffer him to depart this life without a cloud of grievous affliction; and the relish of heaven, after which for many years he had panted with uncommon ardour, was quickened still more by a bitter taste of the evils of this life in declining age. [c. 28.]

Genseric, king of the Vandals, invaded Africa, and made a dreadful desolation. To the tender mind of Augustine,*

* The tenderness of his spirit, on one occasion, led him into an error in conduct, which much afflicted him. Fussala was a little city in the extremity of his diocese, forty miles from Hippo. The country about it was full of Donatists; and their re-union to the church was accompanied with much difficulty. The priests sent by Augustine were maimed, blinded, or murdered. Augustine, on account of the distance, was not capable of serving the people as he could wish; and he at length determined to settle a bishop there, who should undertake the charge of Fussala and the neighbouring district. As soon as he had found a proper priest, he desired the primate of Numidia to come over, and in conjunction with himself, ordain him. The priest, whom, he had chosen, retracted, and the primate was arrived. Augustine was unwilling to send him back without doing the business, and through the facility of his temper, was induced to present, for ordination, a young man named Anthony, whom he had from infancy educated in his monastery, who had never been tried as he ought to have been. The bishop of Hippo had soon occasion to repent of his good nature. The young prelate was complained of by his flock, for rapacity and licentiousness, and was too scandalous in his manners to be endured any longer. His connexion with Fussala was therefore dissolved by a formal sentence. Anthony, however, appealed to the bishop of Rome, who was inclined to support him. Augustine insisted on the propriety of his expulsion, and maintained, that compassion for the man himself, as well as for the people, whom he had so much abused, required that the sentence should be supported, lest he should be hardened still more in iniquity. Anthony himself made restitution of the sums of which he had defrauded them; yet he prevailed after-

the devastatio… …rities inflicted on the pastors, the des… …, and the destruction of all church-order v… …, must have been peculiarly afflicting. Count …e, one of the greatest Roman heroes of those tim… …, undertook the defence of Hippo against the barbarians. He had not been without convictions of divine things, and Augustine, who was intimate with him, had endeavoured to improve those convictions to salutary purposes. But, to seek human glory, and the honour which cometh from God only, at the same time, was found to be incompatible. Boniface gained a shining reputation, and followed the world. In these trying times the bishop of Hippo again endeavoured to draw him from the love of the world to God, and Boniface seems all along to have sinned reluctantly. What God might do for him at last, during the time that he lived after the mortal wound, which he received in a duel, we know not. The man, however, was brave and sincere, and had a steady regard for men of real godliness. He defended Hippo for fourteen months, which, after that time, with all Africa, fell under the power of the Vandals.

But Augustine was taken away from the evil to come.

[c. 29.] While he mourned under the miseries of the times, in company with Possidonius † and several bishops, who had fled for shelter to Hippo, he told them, that he had prayed, either that God would free them from the siege, or endue his servants with patience, or take him out of the world to himself. In the third month of the siege he was seized with a fever, which ended in his dissolution, in the year 430. He lived

Death of Augustine, A.D. 430. [c. 31.]

wards on the primate of Numidia to believe him innocent, and to interest himself in his favour. The spirit of Augustine, then threescore and eight years of age, was much broken with this affair. He condemned his own imprudence, and observed, that the danger into which Anthony had cast both himself and the people, so much affected him, that he was almost resolved to relinquish the episcopal office, and bewail his error, the remainder of his days, in privacy.[1] As it appears that Augustine still governed the church of Fussala after this, it seems that the dispute was settled to his satisfaction, and that Anthony was not restored to his See.[2] The story deserves to be noticed, as illustrating the church discipline of the times, and the character of Augustine.

* [Augustine's friend and biographer is called by some Possidius, by others Possidonius.]

[1] Ep. 209. [2] Ep. 224.

seventy-six years, forty of which he had been a presbyter or bishop. He used to say that a Christian should never cease to repent, even to the hour of his death. He had David's penitential psalms inscribed on the wall, in his last sickness, and he read and wept abundantly; and for ten days before he expired he desired to be uninterrupted, that he might give himself wholly to devotion, except at certain intervals. He had preached the word of God constantly, till his last sickness. He left no will: he had neither money nor lands to leave. He left his library to the church. Of his own relations he had taken competent care before. "In his writing," says Possidonius, "the holy man appears: but those who could have heard and seen him speak in public, and particularly in private conversation, would have seen still more." Pity it is, that a man, who had known him for forty years, should have left us so imperfect an account. But the vigour of the human mind was then much declined, and superstition made men childish, though it did not destroy the spirit of piety.

CHAP. IX.

THE THEOLOGY OF AUGUSTINE.

THE serious reader, from a consideration of the mournful condition of the African churches in regard to external things at the time of Augustine's death, will naturally be led to inquire what became of them after the decease of this prelate. It is ever to be remembered, that the real prosperity of the church is not to be estimated by outward circumstances. The Roman empire was dissolving on all sides; and its fairest provinces in Africa fell into barbarous hands at the time of Augustine's death. But the light which, through his means, had been kindled, was not extinct; for, as it depended not on the grandeur of the Roman empire, so neither was it extinguished by its decline. We shall have an opportunity of visiting Africa again, and at present shall close the whole narrative of Augustine, with a brief view of his Theology. The subject is important, not only as tending to illustrate the revival of the Gospel in the West in his time, but also as exhibiting the views of the best and wisest Christians in Europe from that period to

the days of Luther. For a thousand years and upwards, the light of divine grace, which shone here and there in individuals, during the dreary night of superstition, was nourished by his writings, which, next to the sacred Scriptures, were the guides of men who feared God; nor have we in all history an instance of so extensive utility derived to the church from the writings of men.

From the review of the Pelagian controversy, the attentive reader will see, that the article of justification * must be involved in Augustine's divinity; and doubtless it savingly flourished in his heart, and in the hearts of many of his followers; yet the precise and accurate nature of the doctrine itself seems not to have been understood by this holy man. He perpetually understands St. Paul's term to JUSTIFY, of INHERENT RIGHTEOUSNESS, as if it meant, SANCTIFICATION; still he knew what faith in the Redeemer meant; and those parts of Scripture, which speak of forgiveness of sins, he understands, he feels, he loves; but St. Paul's writings concerning justification he understands not sufficiently, because the precise idea of that doctrine entered not formally into his divinity.

I have given, if I mistake not, the outlines of Augustine's views on this most important Christian doctrine. It had been pitiably suffocated, as it were, in the rubbish of the growing superstition, and had been gradually sinking in the church from Justin's days to his own. And I more admire, that he was enabled to recover its constituent parts so well as he did, than that he did not arrange and adjust them perfectly. Mosheim is pleased to represent him as a contradictory writer. I suspect that this writer's prejudices warped his understanding. In truth, if our author's sentiments be understood, he will appear, from his own plan, to be one of the most consistent writers in the world; and, if we make allowance for his mistake in the point just mentioned, which yet he implicitly, though not explicitly, understands, few writers, I think, in any age, may be read with more profit.

To what has been delivered from his writings on the sub-

* I have introduced here a few sentences out of the Theological Miscellany for September 1785, taken from an Essay on Justification, which I wrote in that publication.

ject of justification, little needs to be added here. Two quotations deserve to be read, on account of the solid truth which they contain. "He was made sin, as we are made righteousness, not our own but of God; nor in ourselves, but in him, as he was made sin, not his own but ours; nor was he appointed so in himself, but in us." *

See this blessed doctrine illustrated experimentally in his exposition of the 130th † Psalm, 2, 3, 4. "Behold he cries under the load of his iniquities. He [s. 2.] looked round himself, he surveyed his life, he saw it on all sides covered with flagitiousness; wherever he looked, he found no good in himself. And he saw on all sides so great and so many sins, that trembling, as it were, he cried out, If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand? For he saw almost the whole of human life surrounded with sins, like barking dogs; all consciences to be upbraided; not a holy heart to be found that could presume on its own righteousness; which, because it cannot be found, therefore let every heart rest on the mercy of the Lord his God, and say, If thou, Lord, &c. But what is my hope? There is a propitiation with thee." So constantly, in all ages, do really good men feel alike on this subject: "The humble shall hear and be glad."

The peculiar work for which Augustine was evidently raised by Providence was, to restore the doctrine of divine grace to the church. A vain philosophy had corrupted it partially under Justin, far more completely under Origen. What wonder: To trust in ourselves was the avowed boast of all the Philosophers. An idea of providential kindness in external things floated in the minds of some: but virtue and every internal excellence they expected only from themselves.‡ In this they only copied the impression of that self-righteousness which is natural to all. The distinguish-

* Enchirid. ad Lauren. c. 41. [s. 13. de Fide. spe et caritate.]

† [In the Editions of Augustine it is Psalm cxxix. as he follows the Septuagint arrangement.]

‡ Hear Tully, de Nat. Deor. Virtutem nemo unquam Deo acceptam retulit nimirum recte; propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, et in virtute recte gloriamur, quod non contingeret, si donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus. It is sufficient to tell the English reader, that in this sentence the same self-sufficiency of the human heart, which mere moral preaching encourages, is expressed by the Pagan philosopher, as the undoubted creed of all mankind.

ing glory of the Gospel is to teach humility, and to give to God his due honour; and Augustine was singularly prepared for this by a course of internal experience. He had felt human insufficiency completely, and knew, "that in himself dwelt no good thing." Hence he was admirably qualified to describe the total depravity and apostacy of human nature, and he described what he knew to be true. Thus, in the West, the doctrine of grace was happily revived; and romantic theories, built on mere reasonings, gave way to scriptural truth, supported by experience. And, in all ages, in spite of pride and prejudice, the doctrine of grace has this advantage over the minds of men, that conscience, wherever it is awakened to do its office, always speaks in its favour.

The rise and progress of Pelagianism gave Augustine an opportunity of illustrating the doctrine of grace in the strongest manner. He himself was by no means forward and urgent in the work. Those, who have spoken of him as heated with the spirit of controversy, knew not Augustine.* He was rather slow and cautious in controversy, and so are all men of argumentative minds and humble dispositions. He was by no means at first so clear in his ideas of salvation being altogether of grace, as he afterwards was: particularly, that faith was altogether the gift of God, was not a proposition so clear to his mind, till deeper experience and more attentive search of the Scriptures confirmed him in the truth. When, in his inquiries after divine truth, he was led to see and to be fully convinced of the total apostacy of man; and when he reflected, that he himself was changed by effectual grace, not only without the co-operation, but even in spite of the resistance of his nature, he was gradually brought to acquiesce in St. Paul's views of predestination. It was a doctrine that, with him, followed experimental religion, as a shadow follows the substance; it was not embraced for its own sake. He wrote sparingly, however, upon it, for a long time; content to give plain scripture testimonies, and fearful of involving the bulk of readers in inextricable labyrinths.

It is the impious boldness of heretics, avowedly opposing divine truths, because they are above their reason, which at

* Viz. Grotius.

length necessitates modest and cautious spirits to speak out more plainly concerning the deep truths of God, lest they should leave them to the insults of the enemy. In the further progress of the controversy, the most daring attempts were made to erase from men's minds all ideas of grace; and the specious attempts of Semi-Pelagianism in France seemed ready to overthrow the arguments of Augustine in the minds of many. The Eastern church, for the most part more philosophical than the Western, was infected with those half views of grace; and, unless the bishop of Hippo meant by silence to give countenance to opinions, supported only by corrupt nature, reasoning pride, and the authority of some great names in the church, it behoved him to defend the doctrine of efficacious grace more explicitly. He did so at length, particularly in his latter writings; * he proves the truth from Scripture, appealing to its simple grammatical sense; and as the Antinomian contempt of the use of means appeared in some warm, but injudicious admirers of his doctrine, he states this matter also with his usual strength of argument and perspicuity, and shows the consistency between the exhortations and the decrees of God.

Another subject, of which the reader, versed in theological controversy, would wish to be informed, is, whether Augustine held "particular redemption." Very few words will suffice for this. He constantly connects the doctrine of grace with the influences of the Holy Spirit; I cannot find that he does so with the redemption of the Son of God. In one place, the text, "who would have all to be saved," is explained by him ambiguously and variously. But, in truth, whether Christ died only for the elect, or for all men, was never the object of his controversies; and certainly, in his practical discourses, he always represents the sacrifice of Christ as universal; so every preacher should do, if he means to profit his hearers. On occasion of the controversies, Augustine was objected to, as denying that Christ died for all. But Prosper, his admirer and follower, and as strict a predestinarian as any writer in any age, maintains

* In the foregoing deduction I have attended to the progress of things, as they appear from the publication of Augustine's works at different times. To cite particular passages would be tedious; to those who read him for themselves, needless,—to those who do not, uninteresting.

that Augustine held, "that Christ gave himself a ransom for all."* Doubtless the natural and obvious sense of Scripture is the same, and the notion of particular redemption was unknown to the ancients, and I wish it had remained equally unknown to the moderns. But let us mention the peculiar excellence of his theology.

Humility is his theme. A man may hold the doctrines of grace in the clearest manner, yet himself be proud. He may not have a distinct view of some of them, particularly that of which we have been speaking, yet he may be humble; though without some real knowledge of grace it is impossible he should be so. But the true advantage of just and accurate Christian sentiments, is, that they teach humility. Am I obliged to support the doctrines of grace by such arguments as mere human reason, unassisted by revelation, could invent? No: I confess reason in this sense is beneath them; and if I be truly humble, I shall be content to bear the scorn of philosophers for the confession. Augustine taught men what it is to be humble before God. This he does every where with godly simplicity, with inexpressible seriousness. And in doing this no writer, uninspired, ever exceeded, I am apt to think ever equalled him, in any age. They wrong this father much, who view him as a mere controversialist. Practical godliness was his theme, and he constantly connects all his views of grace with humility.†

Few writers have been equal to him in describing the internal conflict of flesh and spirit, mysterious but certain, ignorantly confounded by philosophers with the conflict between reason and passion, and misrepresented by the profane as enthusiastic. He describes this in a manner unknown to any but those who have deeply felt it; and the Pelagian preten-

* 1 Tim. ii. 6.

† This virtue ever appears conspicuous in Augustine, and perpetually checks the daring and adventurous spirit of investigation, which, as a man of genius and letters, formed a striking part of his character. In speaking of the difficulties attending the doctrine of original sin, he abhors every idea of attempting to solve them in an unscriptural manner. He chooses rather to be content with his ignorance.[1] "Though I now desire, and beg earnestly of God that he will help me out of my ignorance by your means (he is writing to Jerome[2]); nevertheless, if I cannot obtain it, I will pray for patience; since we believe in him, with a promise never to murmur, though he doth not lead us into perfect knowledge of some particular things. I am ignorant of many things, more than I can enumerate."

[1] [Sect. 28.] [2] Letters to Jerome, Ep. [166.]

sions to perfection oblige him to say more than otherwise would be needful, to prove that the most humble, and the most holy, have, through life, to combat with indwelling sin.

Two more practical subjects he delights to handle, charity * and heavenly-mindedness. In both he excels wonderfully, and I shall only wish young students in divinity to convince themselves of this by reading him. A reference of all things to a future life, and the depth of humble love, appear in all his writings; as in truth, from the moment of his conversion, they influenced all his practice. For he never seems to have lost his first love. Hence there is manifest in his works a singular innocence of spirit. No pride, no self-conceit, no bitterness, ever discover themselves in any expression. Calm, equable, modest, cautious of offending, never pathetic, except when roused by zealous love of God and his neighbour; these are the lights in which he constantly exhibits himself. The times were highly unfavourable, the defects of superstition often cloud his writings; yet, at intervals, he vigorously struggles against it, and in one passage particularly laments the growing servilities, the straining at a gnat, and the swallowing of a camel, owning that he conformed, through love of peace and charity, to some things.

His own words well deserve to be quoted, as they evidence the power of good sense and divine grace united in withstanding the prevailing torrent. "I † cannot approve the new practices introduced almost with as much solemnity as sacraments; neither dare I censure them too freely, lest

* I do not remember to have seen a controversial writer of so charitable a spirit as Augustine, in matters of dispute. The proofs of this are endless. Take a single instance, and see how he treats an opponent. "If, in the heat of the dispute, an injurious word may have escaped him, I am willing to think it arose from the necessity of supporting his opinions, rather than from the design of offending me. For when I am a stranger to the temper of a man, I think it much better to have a good opinion of him, than to blame him too hastily. Perhaps he had a kind intention, designing to undeceive me. In that case I am obliged to him for his good will, though I am under a necessity of disapproving his sentiments."

His own practice which he mentions, deserves to be attended to by all controversialists: "When I answer any person in speaking or writing, though provoked by contumelious language, so far as the Lord affords to me, I bridle myself, and restrain the spurs of vain indignation; I consult for the hearer or reader, and thus endeavour not to be superior to another in railing, but to be more salutary by convincing him of his error. B. 3. c. 1. [reply to the letters of] Petilian.

† Ep. to Januarius, 119, [or 55.]

I should give offence to any one; but it grieves me, that so many salutary precepts of Scripture should be held cheap, while our religion abounds with commandments of mere men. Therefore, as to all those customs which are not contained in the Scripture, ordained by councils, or sanctioned by the tradition of the church, and which do not carry in their appearance an evident reason for their existence, I am free to say, they ought to be laid aside. Admit, it cannot be proved, that they are contrary to the faith; yet they burden religion with servile usages, which God, in his mercy, intended to make free: in this respect the condition of the Jews is more tolerable; they are subject indeed, but to divine ordinances, not to the precepts of men. However, the Church, surrounded as she is with chaff and tares, endures many things, yet she cannot tolerate what is contrary to Christian faith and practice." He particularly condemns the custom of divining by the Gospel, and of managing temporal concerns according to words which strike the eye at the first opening of the book.

His conduct toward the Donatists bids the fairest for reprehension; but he acted sincerely: you differ with him in judgment, but it is impossible for you to blame his temper and spirit, if you read him candidly. He carefully checks his people for calumniating the Donatists, and is constantly employed in moderating and healing.

Finally, in Ethics he is superior to most. On the subject of veracity and of faithfulness to oaths, and in general in the practice of justice, in the love of mercy, and in walking humbly with his God, as he wrote most admirably, so he practised most sincerely.

CHAP. X.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JEROME.

THIS renowned monk was born at Stridon, a town in the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia, under the emperor Constantine, in the year 331. The place was obscure, and was rendered still more so by the desolations of the Goths. Nor is it a very clear case

Jerome born, A.D. 331.

whether it ought to be looked on as part of Italy or not. * That Jerome was of a liberal and opulent family, appears from the pains taken with his education, which was finished at Rome, that he might there acquire the graces of Latinity. He was in truth the most learned of the Roman fathers, and was eminent both for genius and industry. He was brought up in Christianity from infancy, and hence, like other good men, who have had the same advantages, he appears never to have known the extreme conflicts with indwelling sin, which, to later converts, have given so much pain, and often have rendered them more eminently acquainted with vital religion.

After his baptism at Rome, he travelled into France, in company with Bonosus, a fellow-student. He examined libraries, and collected information from all quarters; and, returning into Italy, he determined to follow the profession of a monk: a term, which did not, at that time, convey the modern idea of the word. In Jerome's time, it meant chiefly the life of a private recluse Christian, who yet was fettered by no certain rules nor vows, but acted according to his own pleasure. Such a life suited the disposition of a studious person like Jerome. He was, however, made a presbyter of the church, but never would proceed any further in ecclesiastical dignity. He spent four years in the deserts of Syria, reading and studying with immense industry. A commentary on the prophet Obadiah, which he published, bore strong marks of juvenile indiscretion, as he afterwards frankly owned. And here, by the assistance of a Jew, who visited him, Nicodemus-like, in the evenings, lest he should give umbrage to his brethren, he acquired the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and with indefatigable labour he studied also the Chaldee and the Syriac.

On his return to Rome, he became intimate with Paula, the illustrious descendant of the Pauls, so famous in Roman story, with Marcella, and other opulent ladies. The monastic life, which had long flourished in the East, was only beginning to be fashionable in the West. The renowned Athanasius, and his Egyptian friends, rendered respectable, during their exile at Rome, by their sufferings for the faith, contributed to throw a dignity on such a

* Erasm. Life of Jerome, prefixed to his works.

course of life: and the zeal of Jerome nursed the same spirit among serious persons. The ladies I have mentioned, were hence induced to impart a celebrity to the monastic taste by their own example.

Paula, her daughter Eustochium, her son-in-law Pammachius, Marcella, and others, admired and revered Jerome; and he, whose temper was choleric and imperious to a great degree, seems to have lived in much harmony with females, probably because he more easily gained submission from them than from persons of his own sex.

Spleen and calumny hastened the departure of Jerome from Rome. This great man had not learned to command his passions, and to disregard the breath of fame. Unjust aspersions on his character affected him with a very blameable acrimony. He retired again to the East: there several of his admirers followed him. He chose Bethlehem as the seat of his old age, where Paula erected four monasteries, three for the women, over which she presided, and one for the men, in which Jerome lived the rest of his life, enjoying at times the society of his learned friends. He instructed the women also in theology, and Paula died, after having lived twenty years in the monastery.

I shall not spend any time in vindicating the chastity of Jerome, because his whole life was a sufficient answer to calumny in that respect. He was certainly serious in the very best sense of the word, and died in the 91st year of his age, in the year 420.*

Jerome dies at the age of 91. A.D. 420.

Yet it is to be lamented, that a man of so great sincerity, and of a mind so vigorous, should have been of so little service to mankind. The truth is, his knowledge of theology was contracted and low. He confessed, that while he macerated his body in the deserts, he was thinking of the pleasures and delights of Rome. He understood not the true Gospel-mystery of mortifying sin, and, by his voluntary morality and neglect of the body, added to the fame and splendour of his voluminous but ill-digested learning, he contributed more than any other person of antiquity to the growth of superstition. His quarrel with Ruffinus is a reproach to both their memories. Yet, of the two, Jerome

* [Baronius supposes Jerome to have been only 79 and then he would have been born A.D. 341: If he was 91, as is stated above, then in A.D. 329 or 330.]

seems to have been more evangelical in his views; because Origen was erroneous in his doctrines: and it is a sufficient account of so uninteresting a controversy to say, that Ruffinus defended, Jerome accused, Origen.

For the view of his controversy with Augustine, I must refer the reader to the accounts of that Father of the Church.

Jerome was, however, humble before God, and truly pious: and of him it must be said, to the honour of Christian godliness, how much worse a man he would have been, had he not known Christ Jesus; and how much better, if he had known him with more clearness and perspicuity!

The works of a writer so superstitious, though sound in the essentials of Christianity, will not deserve a very particular review. Here and there a vigorous and evangelical sentiment breaks out amidst the clouds. His epistles discover him to have been sincere and heavenly-minded, though his temper was choleric. In a letter to Nepotian* there are various rules worthy the attention of Pastors, concerning the contempt of riches, the avoiding of secular familiarities, and the regulation of external conduct. One observation will deserve to be distinctly remembered: "A clergyman easily subjects himself to contempt, who never refuses invitations to dinner, however frequent."

He wrote an Epitaph upon the death of this same Nepotian sometime after,† eloquent, pious, pathetic. In this he confesses the doctrine of original sin, and celebrates the victory of Christ over death. He makes an excellent use of the public miseries of the times, by recommending more strongly a practical attention to piety. Hence, also, he makes the best apology which could be invented for his favourite solitude.

Jerome's epitaph on the death of Nepotian.

In his letter ‡ to Rusticus the monk, the learned reader, who would see a practical comment on St. Paul's cautions against voluntary humility in the Epistle to the Colossians, may behold it in Jerome. He abounds in self-devised ways of obtaining holiness, while the true way of humble faith in Jesus is not despised indeed, but little attended to.

His letter to Rusticus.

A short letter to Florentius shows genuine humility and

* Paris Edit. vol. i. 6 G. [Ep. ad Nepot. de vit. Cler. prope finem.]
† Id. 8 D. ‡ 15 G.

acquiescence in Christ, as his sole hope, after all his austerities. He calls himself a polluted sinner altogether;* "yet, because the Lord sets free the captives, and looks to the humble and the contrite, perhaps he may say to me also, lying in the grave of wickedness. Jerome, come forth." It was this humble faith in Christ, which checked the impetuosity and arrogance of his natural temper, repressed his vain-glory, and in some degree changed a lion into a lamb. For Jerome, though exactly formed by constitution and habit, to sustain the character of a Pharisee, was too deeply conscious of internal pollution to be one in reality.

Another letter to Florentius.

Toxotius, the son of Paula, had married Læta, by whom he had a daughter, whom the grandmother destined to virginity. Jerome writes to the mother,† advising, that the child be sent to Bethlehem, when grown up, and promising himself to superintend her education. At present he gives rules for her education, while an infant, which are useful, but mixed with superstition. Læta's father, it seems, was a Pagan. Jerome, however, despairs not of his conversion: "All things, he says, are possible with God.‡ Conversion is never too late. The thief from the cross passed into Paradise. Despair not of your Father's salvation. A relation of yours, Gracchus, whose very name is expressive of patrician nobility, a few years ago broke in pieces and burnt the images of idolatry, and received the faith of Christ." Behold the spirit of meekness and charity adorning one of the most rugged tempers in the world, and admire the effect of victorious grace in Jerome.

I am disgusted with the repeated lessons of superstition with which his epistles present us. He knew, however, better things. In a letter to his Paula, he rebuked her immoderate sorrow for the death of her daughter Blesilla, in strains at once evangelical and tender.§ In a letter to Pammachius,‖ who became a monk after the decease of his wife Paulina, the daughter of Paula, he speaks with holy rapture on the love of Christ, according to the ideas of the book of Canticles: "Whether you read or write, or watch or sleep, let love always sound a trumpet

Jerome writes to Paula.

* [Ep. ad Florent. ad finem.] † 19 G.
‡ [Ep. ad Læt. prope initium.] § 57 G. ‖ 59 G.

in your ears; let this trumpet excite your soul; overpowered with this love, seek in your bed Him whom your soul loveth." How much is it to be regretted, that Jerome and his friends should have so hidden their talent; that persons who loved Christ sincerely, had not learned, like the Apostles and first Christians, to profess him in the most public walks of society, and by preaching and conversation to have instructed mankind in general! But such conduct would have required a self-denial and a charity, larger and of a more sublime nature than theirs; to live in the world, and yet remain separate from it, shows a divine strength indeed.

Jerome confesses, that Gregory Nazianzen was his preceptor in theological expositions.* The Eastern mode, thus caught by Jerome, and pursued by a mind eager, and adorned with learning and eloquence, became highly respected in the West. Jerome, as a theologian seems greatly inferior to his contemporary Augustine, though in style and diction superior.

In the foregoing century, Jovinian, an Italian monk, taught, first at Rome, and afterwards at Milan, some points of doctrine directly opposite to the growing superstitions. It is not easy to state, with confidence, either the character or the sentiments of the man. His works are lost. The most celebrated teachers of the Church opposed him vehemently. Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, joined their testimonies against him. The last, indeed, wrote very little, and that little from popular rumour, rather than from any distinct knowledge of the subject; for the weight of popular prejudice overwhelmed Jovinian speedily, so that his doctrines could never enter Africa, nor give the bishop of Hippo an opportunity of knowing him. Had this been the case, I should have expected, from his candour and judgment, that fair and distinct delineation of Jovinian, which we seek in vain from the choleric and prejudiced Jerome. We have of the latter two books against Jovinian,† intemperate, fierce, and ill-supported by Scripture or argument. I have endeavoured, as well as I can, to discover what were his real opinions;‡

Jovinian's doctrines.

* 106 D. [Ep. ad. Nepot. de vit. Cler.] † Tom. xi. 7 D.

‡ Whatever they were, he was condemned in a council, held by Ambrose at Milan, as an heretic, and was, by the emperor Honorius, banished to the island Boa.

but, in wading through the torrent of Jerome's abuse, I find no very certain vestiges; such is the violence and intemperance of his spirit and language. One single quotation is all that I can discover, which can be called Jovinian's own, the language of which is barbarous in the extreme, and justifies Jerome's censure upon him in one respect, as a man void of all classical culture and elegance. The sense of it * seems to be this: "Having satisfied those who were invited to hear me, not for the sake of my glory, but that I may deliver myself from unjust accusations, I sow my field, and visit the new plantations, the tender shrubs, delivered from the whirlpools of vices, fortified by troops. For we know the Church, through hope, faith, and charity, inaccessible, invincible. In her there are none immature, every one is teachable; none can subdue her by violence, or elude her by art."

I admire the positiveness of Mosheim in deciding so peremptorily for the character of a man,† of whose writings nothing has come down to us, but a single sentence so barbarous and doubtful. Certainly he opposed the prejudices in favour of celibacy and fasting. A monk himself, he disclaimed any superior dignity or estimation, on account of his abstinence from matrimony: nor did he think, that fasting added any intrinsic excellence to a character. Thus far is certain: and that he saw so much truth in such an age, proves him doubtless to have been a man of strong sense and manly understanding. But before I dare call him "a worthy opposer of the reigning superstitions," I ought to know his motives. He might be influenced by the pure love of God, the faith of Jesus, and unfeigned humility. He might be moved by a spirit merely prudential, worldly, and even profane. For true Christians and Deists will unite in opposing superstition, from motives very opposite. We are, indeed, always strongly inclined to think well of those persons in past ages, who happened to favour our peculiar sentiments or prejudices; and, on the contrary, we are apt to judge harshly of those who thought in a different manner. Does this

Mosheim censured.

* 8 G.

† Mosheim, Cent. iv. c. iii. 22. [Milner seems to have been acquainted with Mosheim's institutes only through Maclaine's translation, and the original does not in this and in some other instances justify the censure passed upon him.]

propensity account for Mosheim's hasty approbation of the character of Jovinian? Whether it does or not in this instance, I cannot but observe, that this sort of mental imbecility forms one of the most capital defects of that ecclesiastical historian: As to myself, I can only say, I endeavour to guard against it.

Let us hear, however, what are the four propositions of Jovinian. I wish I could give them in his own words, instead of those of his adversary. The first is, that virgins, widows, and married women, who have once been washed in Christ, if in other works they differ not, are of the same excellence. Secondly, he endeavours to prove, that those who have been regenerated cannot be subverted by the devil. The third shows, that there is no distinction in the sight of God, between those who abstain from meats, and those who receive them with thanksgiving. The fourth, that all who keep their baptism shall be equally rewarded in the kingdom of heaven.

The four propositions of Jovinian.

From information so scanty, two very opposite opinions may be deduced: first, that Jovinian, blest with divine illumination, and the faith of God's elect, entered fully into the spirit of apostolical Christianity, condemned the self-righteous taste of the times in ascribing merit to extrinsic excellence, to fasting, and celibacy; recommended them only as external helps of godliness in certain cases; placed all the hope of salvation on the grace of Jesus in unfeigned faith and humility; asserted the perpetuity of this grace in the elect; and while he reprobated the fictitious virtues of proud men, was zealous for the glory of God and his Christ. Whether this was Jovinian's view or not, it undoubtedly was that of the apostles. If it was his, he was no heretic, as he has been represented, but a faithful confessor of Christ. That which strongly inclines me to hope, on the whole, that this was his real character, and that even good men of his age were deceived concerning him, is the soundness with which he interprets Scripture in the few instances to be collected from Jerome's confused account. He observes that those who fell were only baptized with water, not with the Holy Ghost, as appears from the case of Simon Magus, showing from St. John, that he who is born of God doth not commit sin. He mentions the presence of

Jesus at the marriage of Cana, in support of his vindication of matrimony; to which Jerome returns an answer too ridiculous to deserve mentioning. There are other things in Jerome's opposition, weak beyond measure, and which show that sound argumentation was not the talent of this celebrated Father.

If, on the other hand, Jovinian's opposition to the fashionable austerities sprang from the love of the world; if he held that all sins were really equal, and that the devil had no power at all to draw the regenerate into sin, he might be a Stoic, an Epicurean, an Antinomian; a character very remote from that of a Christian. A little clear information of Jovinian's own life, and even a larger specimen of his writings, might have solved this doubt.

Brief account of Vigilantius.

About the beginning of this century, Vigilantius,* a presbyter, a man remarkable for eloquence, who was born in Gaul, and afterwards performed his ecclesiastical functions in Spain, treading in the steps of Jovinian, exhorted and wrote with much energy against the custom of performing vigils in temples consecrated to martyrs, and against the whole apparatus of pilgrimages, relics, addresses to saints, voluntary poverty, and the like. I have here to regret, as in the former instance, the want of materials for estimating the character of this man, whom Mosheim scruples not to call the good Vigilantius.† He quotes indeed Bayle's dictionary; whence I gather, that the presbyter before us was agreeable to that self-conceited sceptic; but the ambiguity remains unremoved. He might oppose superstition from the faith and love of Christ, or from profaneness and sensuality. As no specific blot, however, is affixed to the moral characters of Jovinian and Vigilantius, amidst an intemperate effusion of satire, the probability is, on the whole, that they were pious men, and deserved to be ranked in a very different class from that of heretics.

Jerome wrote apologies for his books against Jovinian,‡

* [The reader who wishes for an interesting account of Vigilantius and some of his cotemporaries, may be referred to a recently published work of Dr. Gilly, *Vigilantius and his Times*, in which the opinions held by many men of piety at that period are fairly represented, and their erroneousness judiciously pointed out.]

† Mosheim, Cent. v. c. iii. 14.

‡ 37 D. 43 D. 44 G.

which gave additional strength to the charges of asperity justly brought against him by many. His commendation of rhetoric is excessive, and his vain-glory odious, though it seems unknown to himself. The best instruction to be collected from them is, to see how the defect of Christian principle fails not to appear in the defect of humility, meekness and love. Augustine and Jerome, in principles and practice, form in this respect a strong contrast. The pieces against Vigilantius deserve the same censure. He absurdly gives to saints a sort of omnipresence and intercessory power.

I have said already, that the contest between Jerome and Ruffinus is uninteresting. It is a deplorable evidence of the weakness and corruption of human nature, even in men constantly engaged in religious studies! A sincere and practical attention to the real peculiarities of the Gospel, can alone secure the genuine holiness of professors, and mortify the whole body of sin. When Jerome is calm and unruffled, and looks to Jesus Christ in faith and love, he seems quite another man from what he is when engaged in controversy. For a single page of Jovinian or Vigilantius, I would gladly give up the whole invectives of Jerome and Ruffinus.

It is remarkable, that Jerome confesses the vast obscurity of the whole Epistle to the Romans.* To one who studied so much, and whose mind was so clouded with self-righteous superstitions, it must appear in that light. He evidently speaks as one irresolute, embarrassed, and confused. His immensity of verbal learning, in which he much excelled Augustine, was not combined with that luminous perspicuity, and comprehensive judgment of doctrine, which enabled the latter to see his way through various mazes, and to find order and beauty, where the former beheld inextricable confusion. Such is the difference between divine and human teaching.

Hence Jerome, in his very voluminous expositions,† speaks at random; is allegorical beyond all bounds, and almost always without accuracy and precision; lowers the doctrine of illumination in 1 Cor. ii. to things merely moral and practical; hints at something like a first and second justification before God; asserts predestination, and, as it were, retracts

* 58 D. tom. ult. of vol. i. † Vol. ii. throughout.

it; owns a good will as from God in one place, in another supposes a power to choose to be the whole of divine grace; never opposes fundamental truths deliberately, but though he owns them every where, always does so defectively, and often inconsistently. It must be confessed, the reputation of this father's knowledge and abilities has been much overrated. There is a splendour in a profusion of ill-digested learning, coloured by a lively imagination, which is often mistaken for sublimity of genius. This was Jerome's case; but this was not the greatest part of the evil. His learned ignorance availed, more than any other cause, to give a celebrity to superstition in the Christian world, and to darken the light of the Gospel. Yet, when he was unruffled by contradiction, and engaged in meditations unconnected with superstition, he could speak with Christian affection concerning the characters and offices of the Son of God.

It was a marvellous effect of Divine Providence, that while all other truths were more or less clouded, that which relates to the person of the Son of God, on whom rests the salvation of men, should remain unsullied. From St. John's days to Jerome we have seen the whole church unanimous in a comprehensive view of the Godhead and manhood of the divine Saviour: whoever opposed either, could never obtain the free sanction of the church. Imperial violence was ever found necessary to extort the admission of such persons into the church as pastors. This essential article of Christianity seems even to have been studied with the minutest accuracy; and few perhaps, even of the best modern divines, have attained the precision of the ancients. Heresiarchs have not failed to take advantage of this circumstance, and the narrow and imperfect conceptions, which some authors have formed of the person of Jesus Christ, have emboldened them to suppose, that the assertion of the manhood enervates the proof of the Godhead. Inferiority to the Father, confessed in any light, seems to startle many minds unaccustomed to the generous and extensive habits of thinking, in which the fathers excelled on this subject; while yet the answer is so easy to all supposed difficulties of this nature; "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood."*

* Athanasian Creed.

CHAP. XI.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE WEST.

It is time to take up the connected thread of history again. But the reader must not expect a successive detail of the proceedings of the Roman princes. After the death of Theodosius, the empire was torn by various convulsions, tending, in the West particularly, to its destruction. It is my duty to watch only the real Church amidst these scenes; for she lived, while the secular glory of Rome was destroyed. Honorius, the son of Theodosius, reigned there, while his brother Arcadius governed at Constantinople.

Honorius, or to speak more properly, his ministers, (for he himself was, like Arcadius, a very feeble prince,) protected the external state of the church, and followed the steps of Theodosius in extirpating the remains of idolatry, and in supporting orthodoxy against the Donatists, and all heretics. The superior advantages of a Christian above a Pagan establishment, even in times of such decline as the present were, appear in the humanity of a number of laws and edicts, by which idolatrous impurities and savage games were abolished, and due care was taken of the needy and the miserable. In what, for instance, but in a Christian government, shall we find so humane a law as that of Honorius, enacted in the year 409, by which judges are directed to take prisoners out of prison every Sunday, and to inquire if they be provided with necessaries, and to see that they be properly accommodated in all things.

Humane law of Honorius, A. D. 409.

In this reign, Rome was sacked by the Goths; and an opportunity was given for the exercise of many Christian virtues, by the sufferings to which its inhabitants were exposed. But enough has been said of this subject, in the review of Augustine's City of God.

Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, was one of the greatest ornaments of Gaul in this century. He was a person of quality, and exercised the profession of a counsellor in the former part of his life. Amator,* his predecessor in the See,

* He foresaw these, by the observation which he made of the frame of his spirit, rather than by any special revelation. From various places in

foresaw however, I apprehend, some symptoms of grace in him, and ordained him deacon. A month after the decease of Amator, he was unanimously elected bishop by the clergy, nobility, citizens, and peasants, and was forced to accept the office notwithstanding the great reluctance which he discovered. He employed himself in the foundation of monasteries, and in enriching the church, while he impoverished himself; and for thirty years, from his ordination to his death, he lived in extreme austerity.

Germanus visits Great Britain. A. D. 430.

About the year 430, that is, about the time of Augustine's death, he visited the island of Great Britain, with an intention to oppose Agricola, the son of a Pelagian bishop called Severinus, who propagated heresy among the churches there. Hence it is probable, that Pelagius, after he had ceased to be famous in the world, had retired into his native country, and there died. It is no wonder that his opinions should there find abettors. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, accompanied Germanus in the mission, which was undertaken on the recommendation of a numerous council in Gaul. Lupus governed his church fifty-two years, and was highly renowned for sanctity. These two bishops, on their arrival, preached not only in the churches, but also in the highways, and in the open country, and vast crowds attended their ministry. The Pelagians came to a conference; the doctrines of grace were debated; the bishops, supporting themselves by express passages of Scripture in the hearing of all the people, were allowed to be victorious, and Pelagianism was reduced to silence. At this time, the Picts, a race of barbarians who inhabited the north, and the Saxons, a German nation, called in by the Britons, as it is well known, to assist them against the Picts, united their forces against the natives. The latter, terrified at the approach of the enemy, had recourse to Germanus and Lupus. Many, having been instructed by them, desired baptism; and a great part of the army received it at Easter, in a church which they made of boughs of trees twisted together.* The festival being over, they marched against the enemy,

Fleury I have collected this short account of Germanus, and, stripping it of the marvellous, have retained only the credible.

* Beda, 1 Hist. [c. 20.]

with Germanus at their head. He, still remembering the profession in which he had spent great part of his youth, posted his men in a valley through which the enemy were to pass, surprised, and defeated them. After these things the two bishops returned to the Continent. The deacon Palladius being ordained bishop of Scotland, arrived there in the year 431. Scotland had never before seen a bishop, and was in a state of extreme barbarism.

Palladius ordained bishop of Scotland.

The same year died Paulinus of Nola,* who had been bishop there twenty years. He was the intimate friend of Augustine, and appears, through the mist of superstition which clouds his narrative, to have been one of the best Christians of the age. He was a mirror of piety, liberality and humility, worthy of a more intelligent age, and of more intelligent writers than those, who have recorded his life. For I choose to dismiss him with this general character, rather than to tarnish his memory with repeating the romances of those who meant to honour him.

Paulinus bishop of Nola dies, A.D. 431.

We have seen how the doctrines of grace were defended in Britain, and it is not to be doubted, but this was done with some saving efficacy. In Gaul, the doctrine of Semi-Pelagianism still maintained its ground, and Prosper and Hilary, who had written an account of it to Augustine, exerted themselves in defending the doctrines which he had taught. Cœlestine, of Rome, supported the same cause; and in the same year he published nine articles, which will deserve some consideration, as they show that the spark of truth was still alive amidst the mass of corruption in the Western Church, and still, under God, preserved some degree of Christian holiness. In these articles, it is owned that all men are, by nature, under the power of sin, by reason of the Fall, from which nothing but grace can deliver any man—that man is not good of himself; he needs a communication of God to him from God himself—nor can a man, though renewed, overcome the flesh and the devil, except he receive daily assistance—that God so worketh upon the hearts of men, that holy thoughts, pious intentions, and the least

IX Articles of Faith published by Cœlestine, A.D. 341.

* [Vit. Paulin. p. 729.]

motion toward a good inclination, proceed from God. "We learn also, says Cœlestine, what we are to believe, from the prayers appointed by the Apostles through the world, and observed with uniformity through the whole church; wherein it is petitioned, that faith may be granted to infidels, idolaters, Jews, and heretics; charity to schismatics, repentance to sinners, and regeneration to catechumens. These prayers are not empty forms; their effects are visible in the conversion of many, for which thanks are returned to God. We must confess, that the grace of God prevents the merits of man; that it doth not take away free-will, but delivers, enlightens, rectifies, and heals it. God is willing, such is his goodness, that his gifts should be our merits, and grants an eternal reward to them: he works in us to will and to do according to his pleasure; but his gifts are not idle in us; we co-operate with his grace, and, if we find remissness proceeding from our weakness, we immediately have recourse to him. As to the more difficult questions which have been discussed at large, we do not despise them, but need not treat of them. Suffice it that we have declared what we believe essential to the faith." *

Thus vigorously and perspicuously did a bishop of Rome maintain the apostolic doctrines, and so strong was the light which, in an age of superstition, had beamed forth from the writings of Augustine. I could not resist the pleasure of adding so valuable a testimony of the continuation of Christian Faith in the West.

Palladius, the pastor of Scotland, being dead, Cœlestine sent Patrick into the same parts in his stead. He was born in Scotland,† at a place now called Dumbarton. Having been carried captive into Ireland, and having remained there a few years, in which time he learnt the language and customs of the country, he was by some pirates afterwards conveyed into Gaul; and after various adventures he returned a volunteer into Ireland, with a view to undertake the conversion of the barbarous natives, who seem, till this time, to have been without any acquaintance with Christianity. It is delightful to observe the motions of Providence, in causing the confusions of war and deso-

The labours of Patrick.

* Fleury, [b. xxvi. c. 12.]

† Fleury, b. xxvi. 13.

lation to be subservient to the propagation of the Gospel. Patrick, intent only on the cause of Christ, amidst all the various scenes in which he was tossed to and fro, was not discouraged by the ill success which at first attended his labours. The barbarous Irish refused to hear him, and he returned into Gaul, and spent some time with Germanus, of Auxerre, whose services in Britain have been mentioned. The conversation and example of Germanus inflamed his mind with fresh zeal, and by his advice he went to Rome; that he might be strengthened in his pious views by the authority of Cœlestine. From this bishop he received such support and assistance as enabled him to revisit Ireland; and at length his success was so great, that to this day he is looked on as the Apostle of Ireland. He first taught the Irish the use of letters; and while we pass over in silence the fictions of which these ages are full, there is no reason to doubt but that he was the instrument of real good to the Irish, both with respect to this life and the next; nor ought such events to be omitted in the History of the Church of Christ. It were only to be wished that we knew them more circumstantially. He died about the year 460, in an advanced age.

Patrick dies, A.D. 460.

In the mean time the clergy of Marseilles, who, in the latter times of the Pelagian controversy, with Cassian at their head, had endeavoured to chalk out a middle path between Augustine and Pelagius, propagated Semi-Pelagianism with success, notwithstanding the strenuous endeavours of Cœlestine of Rome. Nor ought we to be surprised at this: the doctrine of Semi-Pelagianism strongly recommends itself to the depraved taste of mankind; it divides the work of salvation between free grace and human ability in such a manner, that it both retains a specious appearance of humility toward God, and at the same time flatters the pride of man. Fallen creatures cannot but feel weakness and ignorance in some degree; and therefore they do not easily believe themselves perfectly sufficient for their own salvation; yet they love independence, and struggle to preserve it; and hence it is, that Semi-Pelagian notions are so peculiarly grateful to the nature of corrupt man. But it may be observed, that this very circumstance itself forms an

Semi-Pelagianism supported by Cassian.

insuperable objection to their truth. That can never be the wisdom of God in a mystery,* which men in their natural state so readily and cordially approve. Prosper still continued, with the arms of Scripture, to oppose the opinions of Cassian, and to defend the doctrines of the grace of God; Marius Mercator also laboured in the same cause. Gaul and the neighbouring countries no doubt received benefit from their endeavours. Semi-Pelagianism was so far checked, that during the dark ages after this time, the doctrines of grace were cordially received by godly persons, particularly in the monasteries. All, who were thoroughly humbled and contrite, found the comfort of them; while those monks, whose religion was pharisaic, found the Semi-Pelagian scheme to suit their self-righteous pride.† In this manner were religious men in the West divided: Cassian's authority prevailed the more, because of the serious and devout spirit which other parts of his writings possessed, or seemed to possess; ‡ but, as the times grew more corrupt in practice, Semi-Pelagianism gained the ascendant.

About the year 439, Genseric, king of the Vandals, surprised Carthage § in the midst of peace, and used his victory with great cruelty. He himself was an Arian by profession, as the barbarous nations who had received Christianity generally were. How this happened, we have seen before. It does not appear that the Arians were altered in their dispositions. The same unprincipled wickedness, which had ever characterized that party, remained. Genseric showed the greatest malice against the clergy; drove a number of them from their churches, and martyred many. Indeed the abominations of the times seemed to call for such a scourge. The light of divine grace revived in the West, purified many

Genseric the Vandal surprises Carthage, A.D. 439.

* 1 Cor. ii. 7.

† Though this must have been the case for the most part, yet exceptions will occur in the course of this history. There were those whose hearts were better taught than their understandings.

‡ I speak ambiguously, because I have no access to Cassian, except indirectly by the short account of Du Pin. I scarcely need to say, after the accounts I have given of good men before his time, that notwithstanding the views of Prosper appear to me more humble, and holy, and consistently scriptural, yet there might be and there were really good men, on the Semi-Pelagian scheme: for it ought not to be confounded with Pelagianism itself: the theory of this excludes the very idea of grace.

§ Victor Vitens. b. i. [in Biblioth Patr. tom. 7. p. 780. ed. Paris. 1610.]

souls, and fitted them for sufferings; but with the majority, both superstition and practical wickedness increased. Carthage itself was sunk in vice; lewdness was amazingly predominant. So deplorable a thing is it for men to depart from the simplicity of Christian faith! The superstitions now increasing daily, only fortified them the more in self-righteousness; and natural depravity, while grace was neglected, grew to an enormous height. Oppression and cruelty domineered at Carthage; and the poor of the place, in the anguish of their misery, were induced to beseech God to deliver the city to the Barbarians.*

He who informs us of these things is Salvian, priest of

* The account of a council held at Braga, in Lusitania,[1] will both illustrate the melancholy situation of civil affairs in this century (for in the former part of it the council seems to have been held) and will also throw some light on the state of religion in Portugal, a country which has hitherto furnished us with no memoirs. The bishop Pancratian, being president, said, Ye see, brethren, the havoc made by the Barbarians.[2] Brethren, let our care be for the salvation of souls, fearing lest the miseries of the times should seduce our flocks into the way of sinners; and therefore let us give them an example of suffering in our own persons for Jesus Christ, who suffered so much for us. And as some of the Barbarians are Arians, others idolaters, let us confess our faith. He then declared in few words the articles of Christian confession, to which they all assented. Elipand, of Conimbra, said—The Barbarians are among us; they besiege Lisbon, in a little time they will be upon us. Let every one go to his abode; let him comfort the faithful, decently conceal the bodies of the saints, and send us an account of the caves where they are deposited. All the bishops having approved of the motion; Pancratian added, Go home in peace, except brother Potamius, because his church at Æminium is destroyed, and his country ravaged. Potamius generously answered, I did not receive the episcopal function to sit at my ease, but to labour; let me comfort my flock, and suffer with them for Jesus Christ. You have well spoken, replied the president, God be with you. God maintain you in your resolution, said all the bishops. Let us depart with the peace of Jesus Christ. Council of Braga.

At this council ten bishops subscribed to the decrees. Arisbert of Porto, (I suppose the present Oporto), wrote to a friend, a little after the council, in these affecting terms: I pity you, brother—may God look on our misery with the eyes of his mercy. Conimbra is taken, the servants of God are fallen by the edge of the sword. Elipand (one of the bishops of the council) is carried away captive; Lisbon has redeemed itself with gold. Igædita is besieged; nothing to be seen but misery, groaning, and anguish. You have seen what the Suevi have done in Gallicia; judge what the Alani are doing in Lusitania. I send you the decrees of the faith you ask for; I will send you all, if I discover the place where you are hidden. I expect the same fate daily. The Lord have mercy on us.

[1] Fleury, b. xxiii. 6. [Tom. 2. Concil. p. 1508.]

[2] [A few words are here omitted which shew how great was the power of superstition at this period over the best of men, for the first thing which engaged their attention was the care of the relics of the saints.]

Marseilles.* From him we learn, that many nominal Christians attended Pagan sacrifices, and afterwards went to the Lord's Supper. Lewdness was so common among them, that after the Vandals became masters of Carthage, they put a stop to the disorders, and obliged the prostitutes to marry. For these Barbarians had not yet attained the corrupt refinements of Roman luxury. Salvian very justly observes, that the miseries of these orthodox Christians ought to give no offence, because they were only Christians in name. They were in reality very idolatrous in their practices, and even amidst the horrors of war and public calamities, continued impure and voluptuous. And oppression and injustice were so grievous, that the dominion of the Barbarians was really more tolerable than that of the Romans. It was worth while to mention these things, as containing no improper illustration of the adorable justice of Providence, in punishing the wickedness of nominal Christians, not only at Carthage, but in general in this century through the Western empire. What happened to the ancient Jewish Church when grown wicked and idolatrous, and retaining only the form of religion, happens also to Christian nations. God is glorified by taking the power out of their hand, that they may no longer profane his holy name.

Genseric expelled the bishops from their Sees; and in case of any resistance, he made them slaves for life; and this punishment was actually inflicted on several bishops, and on many laymen of quality. Quod-vult-Deus, bishop of Carthage,† and a number of clergy, were expelled, and they fled by sea to Naples. Others having suffered divers torments in Africa, were put on board an old bark, and landed in Campania. Arian bishops were now put into possession of the vacant Sees. Some bishops, who still remained in the provinces, presented themselves before Genseric, and entreated, that as they had lost their churches and their wealth, they might at least be allowed to remain without molestation in Africa, for the comfort and support of the people of God. "I have resolved to leave none of

The sympathizing reader, who enjoys at his ease the civil and religious privileges of our country, will do well to consider how thankful he ought to be for blessings, of which these pious men were deprived.

* Salvian de Gubern. b. 7, [and 8. in Bibl. Patr. tom. 5. p. 198. &c. ed. Paris 1610.] † Victor Vitens, b. i. [in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. p. 781.]

your name or nation," was the reply of the stern Barbarian; and it was with difficulty that he was withheld, by the entreaties of those about him, from ordering them to be thrown into the sea.

Yet, amidst the decline of Roman greatness, the growth of idolatrous superstition, and the horrors of the times, it is pleasing to see the improvements of human society through the influence of Christianity, corrupted and imperfect as it then was. I have before noticed the extinction of the savage games and sports of the Romans. Of a piece with this was the abolition of the barbarous custom of exposing children, a custom which had continued amidst all the grandeur of Rome. Constantine, in the year 331, had made a decree to obviate it; so had Honorius in the year 412. Still, however, those who took care of the children were molested. And now in the year 442, in a council held at Vaison,* it was ordained, that on Sunday the deacon shall give notice at the altar, that an exposed child hath been taken up, and that if any will claim it, he may do so within ten days; otherwise that he who shall afterwards claim such a child, shall have the church censure of Homicide denounced against him.

Decrees against the custom of exposing children, 1st in 331. 2dly in 412. 3rdly in 442.

[canon 10.]

In the year 443, Genseric passed over into Sicily, and so far as his arms prevailed, extended the persecution of the church into that island.

Genseric persecutes the church in Sicily, A.D. 443.

Germanus, of Auxerre, was called a second time into Great Britain, to assist the church against the Pelagian heresy, which again spread itself there. He set out in the year 446, and baffled the attempts of those who disturbed the faith of the Romans. The authority of this person was exceedingly great in these times, and it must be confessed that he employed it to the best purposes, the propagation of Christian doctrine, and the benefit of human society. But I am inclined neither to credit nor to relate his miracles; and I am sorry that I have little else to tell the reader concern-

Germanus of Auxerre supports the church in Great Britain against the Pelagians.

Germanus dies, A.D. 448.

* Fleury, b. xxvi. 52. [Tom. 3. Concil. p. 1456.]

ing him. He died in the year 448, having held the See of Auxerre thirty years.

Attila,* the Hun, now made terrible ravages in various parts of the empire; yet, such is the ascendant which religion, supported by any tolerable decorum of manners, must ever maintain over ignorant barbarism, that his respect for it, in some measure, had already checked his progress in Gaul; and an embassy of Leo, bishop of Rome, from the emperor of the West, determined him not to invade Italy. This was in the year 452. Two years after, Genseric, king of the Vandals, arrived at Rome, which he found without defence.† Leo went out to meet him, and persuaded him to be content with the pillage, and to abstain from burnings and murders. He returned into Africa with many thousand captives. This circumstance gave occasion to an exercise of the Christian grace of charity, worthy to have a place in these annals.

Ravages of Attila.

After a long vacancy, Deogratias was ordained bishop of Carthage in the year 454, at the desire of Valentinian, the Roman emperor, and as it seems by the connivance at least of Genseric. The captives of the latter were divided among his followers, who separated husbands from wives, and children from parents. The heart of Deogratias was moved with compassion; and to prevent these disorders, he undertook to redeem the captives by the sale of all the vessels of gold and silver belonging to the churches. As there were no places large enough to contain the multitude,‡ he placed them in two great churches, which he furnished with beds and straw, giving order for their daily accommodation with all necessaries. He appointed physicians to attend the sick, and had nourishment distributed to them in his presence by their directions. In the night he visited all the beds, giving himself up to his work, notwithstanding his age and infirmities. He lived only three years in his bishopric, was endeared to the memory of the faithful by his virtues; and while Arians performed military exploits, and dealt in blood, this follower of Augustine honoured the real doctrines of the Gospel by acts of meekness and

Deogratias ordained bishop of Carthage, A.D. 454.

* [Prosp. Chron. in ann. 452.] † [Chron. Pithæan.]
‡ Vict. Vit. b. i. [in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. p. 782, and 3.]

charity. It is thus that we still trace the real church of Christ, and see the connexion of principles and practice in the disciples of the Lamb. The sight of so much goodness was too much for Genseric; he took care to suffer no more such bishops, and, in process of time, the orthodox bishops in Africa were reduced to three.

Several godly persons,* after a variety of hardships and tortures, came into the hands of Capsur, a Moorish king, the relation of Genseric. These being arrived at the desert where he lived, and seeing there a number of profane sacrifices, began by their discourse and manner of life to bring over the Barbarians to the knowledge of God, and gained a great multitude in a country where the name of Jesus had not yet been heard of. Desirous of establishing the Gospel there, they sent deputies, who having crossed the desert, arrived at a Roman city; for some part of Africa still remained connected with the Roman empire. The bishop sent priests and ministers, who built a church, and baptized a great number of Barbarians. The Pagan king informed Genseric of these transactions, who, incensed at the zeal of these pious men, condemned them to death. The converted Moors bewailed themselves; and the martyrs as they passed by, said to each of them, Brother, pray for me; God has accomplished my desire; this is the way to the heavenly kingdom.

Genseric ordered the bishops to deliver up the sacred vessels and books; which they refusing, the Vandals took them by force, and plundered every thing. Valerian, bishop of Abbenza, above four-score years of age, was driven alone out of the city, and all persons were prohibited from lodging him in their houses. He lay naked a long time in the public road, exposed to the weather, and thus expired † for the faith of Christ.

The Orthodox celebrating Easter in the church of a town called Regia, the Arians assaulted and massacred them. Genseric ordered, that none but Arians should serve in his family, or in that of his children. A person named Armogastus, in the service of Theodoric, the king's

* [Victor. Vit. in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. Lib. 1. p. 784, &c.]

† [Victor does not expressly say that he thus died, though perhaps he might mean it to be inferred.]

son, was treated with a variety of insults, till death put a period to his sufferings.

Another, named Archinimus, was flattered by Genseric himself, and was promised immense wealth, if he would receive Arianism; but his constancy was invincible, and Genseric having given secret orders to the executioners, that if he showed undaunted courage at the moment of execution, his life should be spared; he by this means was suffered to live.

Satur, steward of Huneric's house,* was very free in his censures of Arianism. Being accused, he was threatened with the loss of all his property, and was further told, that his wife should be married to a keeper of camels if he persevered. His wife, who had several children and a sucking infant, entreated him to comply. He answered, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.† Let them do what they will, I must remember the words of the Lord, Whoever doth not leave wife, or children, or lands, or houses, cannot be my disciple." They stripped him of all and reduced him to beggary.

Genseric afterwards ordered the great church of Carthage to be shut up, and banished the ministers: and wherever his arms prevailed, he made the people of God to feel his fury. The whole empire of the West, indeed, was falling into ruin. Odoacer,‡ king of the Heruli, made himself master of Rome in the year 476, and though he was afterwards obliged to give way to the victorious arms of Theodoric § the Goth, yet Roman emperors have ceased in Italy ever since.‖ Africa, we have seen, bowed under the yoke of the Vandals; Spain, and a great part of Gaul was held in subjection by the Goths; the other part of Gaul was subjugated by the Franks, who, in process of time, became masters of the whole country, which from them bears the name of France; and the southern part of Great Britain was overpowered at length by the Saxons. These were idolaters, and the small remains of the ancient Britons, Christians by

Rome taken by Odoacer, A.D. 476.

* Huneric was the son and successor of Genseric. † Job ii. 10.

‡ [Evagrii Hist. l. 2. c. 16.] § [Evagrii Hist. l. 3. c. 27.]

‖ I have not thought it worth while to mention particularly the emperors of the West since the death of the great Theodosius, as they are all characters very feeble or obscure, and no way interesting in church history.

profession, retired into the inaccessible mountains of Wales. The poverty of the northern parts of the island was their security. And we must be content to leave the fruits of the labours of Germanus, Palladius, and Patrick, in a very low state, till we shall have occasion to speak of the conversion of the Saxons. The Franks also were at present idolaters; the Barbarians, who ruled in the other parts, were Arians, though it does not appear that any of them persecuted the faithful with so much rage as the Vandals did. Evaric,* king of the Goths in Spain, seemed ambitious to tread in the steps of Genseric: he forbad the ordination of bishops in the room of those who were deceased, and sent others into banishment. The churches fell into decay, and congregations seldom assembled. Indeed it was a very gloomy season with the Western church in general. The wrath of God was evidently poured out on the churches for mercies long abused; but there were those who, by the principles of divine grace, were enabled in patience to possess their souls, and to evidence that the real church was far from being extinguished.

Among the stars that illuminated this disastrous period, was Sidonius † of Lyons.‡ He was of one of the noblest families in Gaul, and was a celebrated orator and poet. About the year 472, he was, contrary to his wishes, appointed bishop of Clermont, in Auvergne. His liberality was highly laudable, and even before he was bishop he did frequently, unknown to his wife, convert his silver plate to the use of the poor. His brother-in-law,§ Ecdicius, was remarkably distinguished for the same virtue. The Goths having ravaged the country during the scarcity occasioned by a grievous famine, which was added to the national afflictions, Ecdicius collected 4,000 of both sexes, whom he lodged in his houses, and nourished during all the time of the scarcity. Patiens,‖ bishop of Lyons, also extend-

Sidonius of Lyons made bishop of Clermont, A.D. 472.

The bounty of Patiens, bishop of Lyons.

* [Sidonii Ep. lib. 7. Ep. 6. and Greg. Tur. Hist. l. 2. c. 25.]

† [Gennad. de Vir. illust. c. 92. and Vit. Sidon. per J. Sirmond.]

‡ I dare not, however, rank this man among the ornaments of the Church of Christ. I find him continually with princes and emperors, writing their panegyrics, and absorbed in secular politics. Of his evangelical taste and spirit, I know no sufficient evidence.

§ Fleury, b. xxix. 36. [Greg. Tur. Hist. l. 2. c. 22, and 24.]

‖ [Sidonii Ep. l. 6. Ep. 12.]

ed his bounty to the remotest parts of Gaul. The providence of God was remarkable in tempering the miseries of the Christians, in these times, by raising up such exemplars of munificence. Patiens possessed the pastoral character in a great degree, and reclaimed many of the Burgundian Arians. His virtues were admired by Gondebaud, the Burgundian king, who resided at Lyons.

A council was held in Gaul, from the confused account of which it appears that Semi-Pelagianism was still very prevalent there; nor is it to be wondered at, if we consider the little light of the Scriptures which now remained in the church.

Genseric dying in the year 477, was succeeded by his eldest son Huneric.* He began his reign with a mild aspect toward the faithful, and, after an interval of twenty-four years, permitted them to ordain a bishop of Carthage, but under this condition, that the Arians at Constantinople should have the same liberty, which those of the general church had at Carthage. The people protested against the condition, and with good reason, because the power was out of their hands, and they said, "We will not accept a bishop on such terms. Jesus Christ will govern the church, as he has done hitherto." But Huneric disregarded the protestation; and Eugenius was elected bishop of Carthage.

Death of Genseric, A.D. 477.

All mankind soon bore witness to his virtues. The revenues of the church were indeed in the hands of the Arians; but large sums were every day brought to him, all which he faithfully distributed to the needy, and reserved to himself no more than daily bread. The Arian bishops soon murmured; they represented him as a dangerous preacher, and expostulated with Eugenius himself for suffering persons to hear him who wore the Vandal habit, which was, it seems, at that time perfectly distinct from the Roman. God's house, he replied, is open to all, without respect to persons.

The virtues of Eugenius bishop of Carthage.

Huneric, who had only complied thus far with the inclinations of the Roman Christians in his dominions, to oblige the court of Constantinople, where the emperor of the East reigned, began gradually to show the ferocity of

* [Victor Vit. b. ii. [in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. p. 786, &c.]

his spirit. Fearing that he should lose his Vandals, if they attended the preaching of Eugenius, he ordered guards to watch at the doors of the church, who, when they saw a man or woman in a Vandal habit, struck such persons on the head with short staves jagged and indented, which being twisted into the hair, and, drawn back with sudden violence, tore off both the hair and skin.* Many suffered extremely by this means; women, who had been thus treated, were led through the streets, with a crier going before, to exhibit them to the people. The faithful, however, remained firm; and those who belonged to Huneric's court could not be induced to receive Arianism. He deprived them of their pensions, and sent them to reap corn in the country. As these persons had been educated like gentlemen, the punishment was equally severe and reproachful. But they bore the cross for the sake of Him who gave himself for them.

Victor, bishop of Vita, to whom, as an eye-witness and fellow-sufferer, we are indebted for the history of this memorable persecution, relates some visions, which were looked on as preludes of the horrible desolations which approached. We may pass by these without any loss to the reader, and also without any impeachment of the general credibility of the historian. Huneric at first ordered, that none should hold any office who was not an Arian. He afterwards confiscated the possessions of the rejected orthodox, and banished their persons into Sicily and Sardinia.† He seized the consecrated virgins, and treated them with excessive cruelty and indecency, with a view to extort evidence from them against the bishops. But nothing could be drawn from them to suit the tyrant's purpose, though many died under the torments.

Huneric afterwards banished pastors and people, to the amount of four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six,‡ into the desert. Felix, of Abbirita, had been bishop forty-four years, and by the palsy had lost his speech, and even his understanding. The faithful compassionating his case, implored the king, that the old man might be allowed to end his days quietly at Carthage. Huneric, as if he had been ambitious to outstrip the Pagan

Persecutions of Huneric.

* Fleury, b. xxx. [c. 2. Victor Vit. in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. p. 788.]
† [Victor Vit. l. 2. p. 790.] ‡ [Some copies read 4961.]

emperors in persecution, said, "Let him be tied to wild oxen, and be so carried, where I ordered;" on which, they tied him across a mule like a piece of timber. These Christian heroes were conducted to the two cities of Sicca and Lares, were the Moors were directed to receive and conduct them into the desert. They were at first confined in a prison, where their brethren were allowed to have access to them, to preach, and to administer the Lord's Supper. Some young children were of the number, several of whom were tempted by their mothers, to admit Arian baptism; but OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS STRENGTH was ordained, and they continued faithful.

The guards were soon after severely chastised for granting these privileges; none were permitted to visit the prisoners; they were thrown one upon another, and, for want of room, could not withdraw, to comply with the necessities of nature. The effect of this was horrible beyond description. Some of their brethren found means to enter unobserved among them, and of these was Victor, our author, who sunk up to the knees in the ordure. How strong was that grace which caused them patiently to endure, rather than free themselves by unfaithfulness!

The moors at length ordered them to march. They went out on the Lord's day, their clothes, their heads, and their faces covered all over with filth, and they sang as they went, "Such honour have all his saints." Cyprian, bishop of Uniziba, comforted them, and gave them all he had, wishing for the honour of being carried with them. This was not granted him at present. He afterwards was confined, suffered much, and was sent into banishment. There is a voice in man which speaks loudly in favour of suffering innocence. The whole country resounded with the cries and groans of the people, flocking to behold them, and throwing their children at their feet. Alas, said they, to whom do you leave us? Who shall baptize these children? Who shall administer the Lord's supper to us? Why are not we permitted to go with you? Among the rest, a woman was observed leading a child by the hand. Run, my boy, said she, observe what haste these holy men make to receive the crown. Being reproved for desiring to go along with them, she replied, I am the daughter of

the late bishop of Zurita; and I am carrying this child, who is my grandson, lest he be left alone, and the enemy draw him into the snares of death. The bishops, with tears in their eyes, could only say, God's will be done. As they travelled, when the aged or the young, who wanted strength, were not able to advance, the Moors pricked them forward with their javelins, or threw stones at them. Such as were not able to walk were tied by the feet, and dragged along. Many died in the march; the rest arrived at the desert, and were fed with barley, nor were even allowed this after a season.

In the year 483, Huneric sent an edict to Eugenius, with orders to read it in the church, and dispatched couriers with copies of it through Africa. The purport of the Edict was, after upbraiding the faithful bishops for their zeal in spreading their doctrines, to command them all to appear at Carthage, to dispute with the Arian bishops on a certain day, and to prove their faith, if they could, by the Scripture.

Edict of Huneric A.D. 483.

The most alarming words were, "resolving not to suffer any scandal in our provinces." The bishops interpreted them to mean, that he would not suffer any who professed the doctrine of the Trinity to remain in his dominions. [Eugenius] therefore drew up a remonstrance, containing in substance a petition, that Huneric would send for the bishops who were beyond the seas. Huneric, regardless of the remonstrance, persecuted the most learned bishops under various pretences. He banished the bishop Donatian, after giving him an hundred and fifty bastinadoes. He treated others also with great cruelty, and forbade any of his sect to eat with the faithful.

Huneric banishes Donatian.

On the first of February, the day appointed for the conference, the bishops resorted to Carthage from every part of Africa, and from all the islands subject to the Vandals. Huneric, for many days, made no mention of the conference, and separated those of the greatest abilities from the rest, that he might put them to death on false pretences. One of the most learned, named Lætus, he burned alive, with a view of intimidating others. At length, when the conference was opened, the orthodox choose ten of their own number, to answer for the rest. Cirila, the chief of

the Arian bishops, was seated on a magnificent throne, with his partisans sitting in an exalted station, while the orthodox continued standing below. The latter saw what a mock-conference it was likely to prove, and remonstrated; the Arians ordered one hundred bastinadoes to be given to each of them. May God look down on the violence that is offered us, said Eugenius. Cirila finding them better prepared than he imagined, made use of several cavils to avoid the conference. The orthodox foreseeing this, had prepared a confession * of faith, in which the Trinitarian doctrine is very explicitly declared, and which concludes thus: "This is our faith, supported by the authority of the evangelists and apostles, and founded upon the society of all the general churches through the world; in which, by the grace of God Almighty, we hope to persevere till death."

The Arians,† incensed at this confession, reported to the king that the orthodox had raised a clamour, to avoid the conference. The tyrant had taken his measures; orders were sent through the provinces, by virtue of which the churches were all shut in one day, and their revenues given to the Arians. He allowed the orthodox till the first of June in the same year, that is, 484, to consider whether they would merit pardon by a retractation.

Such were the measures made use of to obliterate the doctrines of divine grace in Africa, where they had been so gloriously revived by Augustine. Huneric ordered the bishops to be expelled from Carthage, stripped them of horses and changes of raiment, and forbade, under terrible penalties, any one to give them victuals or lodgings.‡ The bishops remained without the walls of the city, exposed to the weather; and meeting accidentally with the king, they all came to him: "Why, say they, are we treated thus?" He looked with fury, and ordered some armed horsemen to ride in among them, who wounded many.

Cruelties of Huneric.

Huneric could not but be conscious that his conduct was no less absurd than iniquitous. On second thoughts, he ordered them to go to a place called the temple of Memory,

* Victor, b. ii. [in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. p. 795, &c. and tom. 4. p. 502—510.]
† [Lib. 3. p. 798.]
‡ [Lib. 3. p. 801.]

where they were shown a paper rolled up, and were required to swear to what was contained in it. Are we like beasts, void of sense and understanding, cried two of them, that we should swear at a venture, without knowing what is contained in the paper? In the issue, of four hundred and forty-six bishops, who came to the conference, forty-eight died, many of them, probably, through hard usage; forty-six were banished into Corsica, three hundred and two into other places; and most of the rest made their escape.

Among those sent into exile was Vigilius, of Thapsus, a man famous for his writings.* To prevent the persecution from being more fierce, he [concealed his own name and] composed a number of treatises under the names of some of the most renowned fathers, [this] he himself acknowledged with regard to several of them. The celebrated creed, called that of Athanasius, is ascribed to him.† He appears to have meant well; but the artifice was extremely culpable; and partly by his practice, and partly by his example, he has caused much confusion and uncertainty in the works of the fathers. Vigilius himself retired to Constantinople.

Vigilius exiled.

Huneric, as if the very soul of Galerius had been assumed by him, pursued his sanguinary designs with vigour. He sent executioners among the laity, who whipped, hanged, and burned alive the faithful. Eugenius, before he left Carthage, had written a strenuous letter, to warn his flock: and it must be owned that many of them gave the noblest proofs of sincerity. Donysia, while she was scourged, and the blood was streaming from her body, said, "Ministers of the devil, what you now do to confound me with shame (for they had stripped her naked,) is my glory;" and she exhorted the rest to suffer martyrdom. Looking severely at her son, whom she saw dreading the torture, "Remember, son, said she, that we have been baptized in the name of the Trinity. Let us not lose the garment of salvation, lest the Master should

Further cruelties of Huneric.

* [Aubert Miræ. Auctar. c. 59.]

† I have wondered why persons, who love not the doctrine of the Trinity, should triumph so much on account of this circumstance. If the sentiments of the creed be defensible by Scripture, the name of Vigilius cannot disgrace them; if they be not, that of Athanasius can do them no honour.

say, Cast them into outer darkness." The young man upon this suffered death with constancy : and she thanked God with a loud voice, embracing his body. Many suffered with her, strengthened by her exhortations.*

The sufferings of many others were very dreadful; it is even painful to write or read the narratives. A woman called Victoria, with amazing constancy supported her cruel tortures, unmoved also by the entreaties of her husband, who besought her to pity their common children.

Victorian, of Adrumetum, was at that time governor of Carthage under the king. He was the wealthiest man in Africa : to gain him over to Arianism was to gain a prize; and Hunneric assured him of his particular favour, if he would submit to be re-baptized, and renounce the Trinitarian creed. " Tell the king," said he, " if there were no other life after this, I would not for a little temporal honour be ungrateful to my God, who hath granted me the grace to believe in him." The king, incensed at an answer truly christian, tormented him grievously ; and thus he slept in Jesus. At Tambaia, two brothers continued a whole day suspended, with large stones fastened to their feet. One of them, overcome with the torture, at length desired to recant, and to be taken down. " No, no, said the other; this, brother, is not what we swore to Jesus Christ : I will testify against you, when we come before his awful throne, that we swore by his body and blood, that we would suffer for his sake." He said much more, to rouse and encourage him ; at length his fellow-sufferer cried out, " Torment as you please, I will follow my brother's example." The executioners were quite fatigued with torturing them by hot irons and hooks, and at length dismissed them, remarking that every one appeared ready to follow the example of the two brothers, and that none was brought over to Arianism. —I see still the marks of the true church patiently suffering for the truth's sake, and victorious in suffering.

At Typasa, the secretary of Cirila was ordained bishop by the Arians. The inhabitants seeing this, transported themselves into Spain, as the distance was but small : some, who could meet with no vessels, remained in Africa. The new

* Victor, [Vitensis or Uticensis Lib. 3. in Bibl. Patrum tom. 7. p. 802. &c.]

bishop laboured by courtesy to win their favour ; but they, in contempt of his ministry, assembled themselves in a private house for public worship. Huneric hearing of this by a message from the bishop, ordered their tongues to be cut out and their right hands to be cut off, in the public market-place. He seems to have permitted them to retire to Constantinople, but to have been determined to prevent their open confession of the Trinity. Shall I, in compliance with modern prejudices, throw a veil over the rest, or shall I proceed according to historical veracity ?—IMPERIOSA TRAHIT VERITAS. A miracle followed, worthy of God, whose majesty had been so daringly insulted, and which must at that time have much strengthened the hearts of the faithful, who needed indeed some peculiar consolations amidst such scenes of horrible persecution. The miracle itself is so well attested, that I see not how it can be more so. The reader shall have both the fact and its proofs. Though their tongues were cut out to the root, they spake as well as before. " If any one doubt the fact, says Victor of Vita,* let him go to Constantinople, where he will find a sub-deacon, called REPARATUS, one who was thus treated, who speaks plainly, and who has a particular respect shown him in the palace of the emperor Zeno, especially by the empress."

A miraculous interposition.

Æneas, of Gaza, a Platonic philosopher, a cautious and prudent person,† was at that time at Constantinople, and writes thus in the conclusion of his Dialogue on the Resurrection : ‡ " I myself saw them, heard them speak, and wondered, that their utterance could be so articulate. I searched for the organ of speech, and not trusting my ears, was resolved to have the proof of the eyes. Causing them to open their mouths, I saw that their tongues were plucked out even by the roots, and was then more surprised, that they could live, than that they could speak." Is this sufficient evidence ?

Proofs of the miraculous interposition.

* [Lib. 3. p. 804. in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7.]

† Gibbon (Decline of Rom. Emp. vol. iii. c. xxxvii.) is struck with this evidence, in conjunction with that of the rest. Yet he intimates that the infidel's suspicion is incurable. Does he allude to himself ? To what purpose does he say so, if he does not ? If he does, what is this but to deny all reasonable evidence, and confess himself to be unreasonable ?

‡ [Æneas Gaz. in Theophrast. Bibl. Patr. tom. 8. p. 92.]

Hear more: Procopius, the historian, in his History of the Vandalic War,* says, Huneric ordered the tongues of many to be cut out, who were afterwards seen in the streets of Constantinople when I was there, talking without any impediment, or feeling any inconvenience from what they had suffered. Count Marcellinus, in his Chronicon, says, "I have seen some of this company of faithful confessors at Constantinople, who had their tongues cut out, but spake nevertheless without any imperfection in their utterance." To name only one more witness: the great emperor Justinian, in a Constitution published by him for Africa, after it had fallen into his dominion, testifies, that he had beheld the same.†

Numbers were maimed in various ways.‡ Some lost their hands, some their feet, others their eyes, their noses, or their ears. Dagila, wife of one of the King's cup-bearers, though nobly born and brought up tenderly, was severely scourged and banished into a desert, joyfully forsaking her house, husband, and children.

Seven monks of Capsa having been persuaded to come to Carthage,§ flattered with fair promises and the royal favour, showed, however, THAT THEY HAD ANOTHER SPIRIT in them. Inflexibly firm in the profession of the Trinity, and disappointing the hopes of Huneric, they were martyred by his orders.

The whole clergy of Carthage, after having been almost starved with hunger, were exiled.‖ Elpidiphorus, who had been baptized into the faith of the Trinity, and who had had for his sponsor the deacon Muritta, was more active than others in tormenting the faithful. As they were preparing to stretch Muritta on the rack, the venerable aged person suddenly drew out, from under his robe, the linen with which he had covered Elpidiphorus at his coming out of the font, and spreading it in the view of the whole company, he said to the apostate, who sat as his judge, "Behold the linen which shall accuse you at the coming of the great Judge, and shall cast you headlong into the lake of brimstone, because you have clothed yourself with cursing,

* B. 1. c. viii. † B. 1. [tit. 27. Cod. de Off. Præfect. Prætor. Afric.]
‡ | Victor Vit. in Bibl. Patr. tom. 7. p. 804.]
§ [Ibid p. 811, and 12. | ‖ [Ibid p. 804.]

by renouncing the true baptism and the faith." Elpidiphorus was confounded, and unable to answer. Two Vandals, who loved the faith, accompanied by their mother, forsook their wealth, and followed the clergy into banishment. Theucarius, an apostate, advised the Arian governors to recal some of the young children, whom he, according to his office, had taught to sing the service of the church, and whom he knew to have the best voices. Messengers were sent to recal twelve, who, weeping and holding the banished clergy by their knees, refused to leave them. They were separated from them by force, and were brought back to Carthage. But neither flatteries nor the bastinado could cure them of their attachment. These, after the persecution was over, were held in high estimation in the church. The Arian bishops went everywhere armed with swords, accompanied by their clergy. One, named Anthony, distinguished himself by his cruel treatment of Eugenius of Carthage, who was his prisoner, and whose life he in vain attempted to destroy by repeated severities. Another bishop, called Habet-Deum, was bound by him hand and foot. Anthony, stopping his mouth, poured water on his body. "My brother," said the Arian, unbinding him, "you are now a Christian, as well as we; what should hinder you in future, from obeying the will of the king?" "While you were stopping my mouth, I made," said the holy confessor, "a protestation against your violence, which the angels have written down, and will present to God."

The barbarity was general: persons were stopped on the highways, and brought to Arian bishops, who re-baptized them, and gave them certificates, to prevent their suffering the same violence again. None were permitted to pass from place to place without these certificates. The Arian clergy went, even in the night-time, with armed men into houses, carrying water with them, with which they sprinkled persons in their beds, crying out that they had made them Christians. They put the physician Liberatus, and his wife, into separate prisons; when somebody informed the latter, that her husband had obeyed the king, "Let me see him," says she, "and I will do what is well-pleasing to God." They took her out of the prison to her husband,

to whom she said, taking him by the throat, "Unhappy man, unworthy of the grace of God, why will you perish eternally for a transitory glory? Will your gold and silver deliver you from hell-fire?" "What is the matter, wife," he replied; "what have they been telling you? I am what I was by the grace of Jesus Christ, and will never renounce the faith."

Cresconius, a presbyter of the city of Myzenta, was found dead in a cavern of mount Zica. Various persons of both sexes, fleeing from the persecution, suffered thus through cold and hunger.

At length,* after an horrible reign of seven years and ten months, in which time the church was purged by as severe a persecution as any ever known, in the year 485 died the tyrant Huneric of a disease, in which he was corroded by worms,—a signal monument of Divine justice! Gontamond, his nephew and successor, stopped the persecution, and recalled Eugenius to Carthage. In the year 487, a council was held at Rome, with Felix, the bishop, at its head,† in which were forty bishops of Italy, four of Africa, and seventy-six priests. The rules of penance, prescribed by this synod, on occasion of the late persecution, partook partly of the prevailing superstitions, and partly of the primitive strictness of discipline. Clergymen, who had suffered themselves to be re-baptized, were deprived not only of the ministry, but even of lay-communion, till their death. Other articles breathe the same severe spirit; yet I rejoice, amidst the excess of discipline, to find, that real religion was honoured. One rule of the council deserves to be mentioned for its good sense: 'No clergyman shall receive into his city the penitent of another bishop, without his certificate in writing.'

Death of Huneric the tyrant, A. D. 485.

Council at Rome, A. D. 487.

In the year 493, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, now complete master of Italy, after he had ruined Odoacer, made a law to restrain all the adherents of the latter from making a will, or disposing of their estates. All Italy was alarmed, and Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, was applied to, that he might intercede

Odoacer mastered by Theodoric, A. D. 493.

* [Chron. Vict. Tun.] † Ep. 7. Felix. [Labbe Vol. iv. p. 1149. ed. Paris 1671.]

with the king. Lawrence, bishop of Milan, joining with him, they went together to Ravenna, where Theodoric resided.* Epiphanius obtained favour for all, except some few leaders of the party. Theodoric, who had before honoured and experienced the virtues of Epiphanius, discoursed with him in private, and said, "You see the desolations of Italy; the Burgundians have carried away captive a number of the inhabitants; I wish to redeem them; none of the bishops is so proper as yourself, undertake the embassy; I shall order what money is necessary for you." Epiphanius accepted the commission on condition that Victor, bishop of Turin, might be his companion. In the year 494, Epiphanius passed the Alps; all the people came out to see him, and brought presents, which he distributed among the poor. Arriving at Lyons, where Gondebaud, the Burgundian king, resided, he advised him to dismiss the captives without ransom. It seems astonishing, that one Arian king should negotiate with another of the same sect by means of a Trinitarian: but it is just to notice these things, that the reader may not suspect all Arians to have had the spirit of Eusebius of Nicomedia, or of Huneric the Vandal. The true triumphs of real godliness and virtue, in softening the miseries of human society, appear in these transactions of Epiphanius. Let philosophers say that this was all the effect of superstition: it is my duty to show, that even in a superstitious age, godliness did exist, and did perform what mere superstition could not; and Philosophy should stop her mouth, when it is remembered, that she seldom, if ever, did so much good to society, as the Christian religion did, even when discoloured by superstition.

Epiphanius and Victor commissioned to redeem the captives in Burgundy, A. D. 494.

Gondebaud, who was no stranger to the character of Epiphanius, restored to him without ransom all the prisoners, except those who were taken armed, they being the property of the captors. Six thousand were sent away without ransom; and Theodoric's money, aided by the liberality of Syagria, a lady of quality and of good works, and of Avitus, bishop of Vienne, redeemed the rest. Epiphanius travelled to Geneva, to obtain the release of the captives there, and was equally successful with Gondegisilas, the brother of

* Ennodius in Vitâ. Epiph.

Gondebaud. He returned into Italy with troops of redeemed captives, and easily obtained for them from Theodoric the recovery of their lands.

This excellent person was born at Pavia in the year 438. From early life he was devoted to divine services, and, at twenty years of age, was ordained deacon. He was made bishop at the age of twenty-eight; and it must be confessed that he gave himself wholly to the service of God and the good of mankind. He was often successfully employed in public affairs. In the year 474, he had been sent by Nepos, at that time emperor of the West, to Evaric, king of the Visigoths, then residing at Toulouse, though after the Visigoths were ejected from Gaul, they resided in Spain. Epiphanius negotiated a peace with Evaric successfully, but refused an invitation to dine with him, because he was an Arian. In 476, Odoacer, making himself master of Italy, Epiphanius, by his intercession, obtained the deliverance of a number of captives; and with no other fund, than the supplies of Providence, he repaired the city of Pavia, which had been pillaged, and rebuilt the churches. When Theodoric entered Italy in 489, Epiphanius came to him to Milan, and was courteously received. He still softened the horrors of war during the contest between Odoacer and Theodoric, and did good to all, even supporting those who had pillaged his lands. In the year 496, he died, being fifty-eight years of age.

Epiphanius was born at Pavia, A. D. 438.

He died A. D. 496.

About this time decretals of Gelasius, bishop of Rome, were published: a few of them relating to ordination* will deserve to be mentioned. "He, who is taken from a monastic life, may be ordained priest in a year's time; but he must not be illiterate; he, who cannot read, can only be a door-keeper. All laymen that shall be ordained shall have six months probation; and cannot be admitted priests till after eighteen months. Bishops are forbidden to receive, much less to promote, such clergymen as pass from one church to another.

Gelasius† himself seems to have been an ornament to Christianity. He died in the year 496. He composed a treatise against some Romans, who had a desire to re-esta-

* Fleury, b. xxx. Sec. 34. † Fleury, b. xxx. 41.

blish the ancient superstition of the Lupercalia.* "I forbid, says he, any Christian to practise these superstitions: leave them to heathens. I think it my duty to declare to Christians, that they are fatal. I doubt not but my predecessors solicited the emperors to abolish this abuse; they were not heard, and this ruined the empire."—It appears hence how slowly and stubbornly the old idolatries departed out of Christendom. The testimony of Gelasius deserves our attention, because his manners were holy. He was incessantly employed in prayer, reading, writing, or business, and in conversation on spiritual things with godly men. Idleness and luxury were equally avoided by him; negligence in a bishop he esteemed dangerous to souls; and his liberality to the poor was unbounded. To all this, it may not be quite insignificant to add, that he composed hymns after the manner of Ambrose.

Death of Gelasius, A. D. 496.

About the year 496, Clovis, king of the Franks, was baptized, and received into the general church. He himself, perfidious, ambitious, and cruel, was no honour to any religious denomination. But some remarkable circumstances of Providence attended his reception of Christianity; which will therefore deserve a place in these memoirs. The Franks, or French, were a German nation known long before; who dwelt about the lower Rhine. Having passed this river, they entered into Gaul, under the conduct of Pharamond, their first king, about the year 420. Clodio, Merovæus, Childeric, and Clovis, reigned in succession after him. Like the rest of the barbarous nations, who desolated the lower empire, they still advanced gradually in conquests, and Clovis ruined the Roman power entirely in Gaul. But he

Clovis baptized, A. D. 496.

A. D. 420.

* Gibbon, in vol. iii. c. xxxvi. is pleased to accuse Gelasius of absurd prejudice, because he supposed those who were for still preserving the festival of the Lupercalia to be only nominal Christians. After having told the less learned reader, that this festival was an ancient piece of idolatry, in honour of the idol god Pan; that young men, and even magistrates ran naked through the streets; that they—modesty forbids me further to explain the indecencies of the ceremonies; suffice it to say, that the whole was calculated to encourage libidinous vices—I would ask such a writer, whether those, who were for still preserving this abomination, could be any more than nominal Christians; whether he knows any evil more severely and more constantly condemned in Scripture than idolatry; and lastly, whether the expression "harmless festival," (it is Gibbon's) does not fasten on him, who uses it, the charge of impudence, or ignorance of Scripture, or malevolence against the word of God.

had to contend with other barbarous invaders, all of whom, however, he subdued at length, and by much carnage and violence he became the founder of the French monarchy. Wicked as he was, he was fitted to become an useful instrument of Providence, like Henry VIII. of England, many ages after. He had married Clotilda, niece of Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians; she was zealous for the doctrine of the Trinity, though both her uncle and the whole nation of the Burgundians professed Arianism. Could her private history be known, it would probably be instructive and edifying. For what else could induce a royal lady, brought up among heretics, and given in marriage to a powerful Pagan, to persevere alone so firmly in the apostolical faith, but the grace of God and the effectual operation of his Spirit, in an age when divine truth had scarce a single patron of great power in Europe?" *

Having a son by her husband Clovis, she endeavoured to pursuade him to permit the child to be baptized, and earnestly reasoned with him on the vanity of his idols, and preached Christianity to him with much sincerity. Clovis, who, it seems, had great affection for his queen, consented at length to the baptism of the infant; but he died a few days after. Clovis in a rage declared, "I have lost my child, because he has been devoted to your deities; had he been devoted to mine, he would have lived." The pious queen answered, "I thank God, who has thought me worthy to bear a child, whom he has called into his kingdom." She had afterwards another son, who was baptized by the name of Clodomer. On his falling sick, the king said, "Yes, I see he will die like his brother, because he has been baptized in the name of your Christ." The mother prayed for his recovery, and the child was restored to health. Clotilda persevering in her exhortations, Clovis heard them, patient, but still inflexible. It pleased God at length to give him a striking lesson, from which he ought to have learned the true art of happiness. Fighting with the Alemanni, he was upon the point of being entirely defeated. Finding himself in the utmost danger, he lifted up his eyes to heaven with tears, and said, "O Jesus Christ! whom Clotilda affirms to be the Son of the living God, I implore

* Greg. Tur. hist. [lib. 2. c. 28. &c.]

thy aid. If thou givest me victory, I will believe and be baptized; for I have called upon my own gods in vain." While he was speaking, the Alemanni turned their backs, and began to flee, and at length submitted and craved quarter.

Penetrated with a sense of Divine goodness, as many wicked men have been for a time, Clovis submitted to the instructions of Remi, bishop of Rheims, whom the queen sent to teach him. The chief difficulty he started was that his people would not follow him in his change of religion. This was obviated by the facility with which they received Remi's lessons. What the lessons were, and what exercises of mind and conscience attended the change, we know not; the external circumstances and forms alone we are informed of, and they are not very instructive. The king himself was baptized at Rheims, and so was his sister, and three thousand of his army. He was at that time the only prince who professed orthodox Christianity. Anastasius, the Eastern emperor, favoured heresy; the rest of the European princes were Arians. Thus a woman was employed as the instrument of a change in her husband; it is true the change was only nominal, but it was followed by very signal effects in Europe, namely, by the recovery of the apostolical faith, and no doubt by the happy conversion of many individuals.

In the year 494, Gontamond,* the Vandal, still increasing his kindness to the church, opened all the places of public worship, after they had been shut ten years and a half, and, at the desire of Eugenius, recalled all the other bishops. He died in the year 496, and was succeeded by his brother Thrasamond.

Gontamond favours the Christians, A. D. 494. Dies, 496.

AND here I finish the general history of the West, for this century. Much, both of Divine providence and of Divine grace, appears in it. Superstition had grown gradually in this and the former century. Relics, and various other instruments of the same class, were fast advancing into reputation. The monastic solitudes were strongly calculated to augment these evils: and, in the writings of various pious persons, the unguarded and very injudicious addresses to martyrs, which occur frequently, and which were rather

* [Isidor. Hist. Vand.]

rhetorical flights that unreal prayers, countenanced exceedingly the growing spirit of apostacy. Every new ceremony, while men were in this frame, strengthened the superstitious spirit, and rendered them less disposed to depend on the Saviour; that is, as the apostle says, TO HOLD THE HEAD,* in the faith and love of the Gospel. Had it not been for the great and solid revival of the doctrine of grace in this century, the wholesome effects of which continued all along in the West, Christianity itself, humanly speaking, would have been in danger of total extinction. The intelligent reader will admire the providential and gracious goodness of the Lord, in preparing, furnishing, and giving success to the important labours of Augustine, through which so many in Africa were enabled to glorify their Saviour by faithfulness to death, under a severe persecution. The despised and desolated church, at once overborne by heretics and by barbarous Pagans, still lived in Italy, Spain, France, and Britain, to the end of the century, when Providence raised up a Clovis to support that, of which he himself, however, knew not the value. We leave the church in Italy and Spain, only tolerated, but mildly treated, particularly in the former; in Britain, confined to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall; in France, ready to rise again into eminence; and in Africa, just recovered from a dreadful scourge, in which she had gloriously suffered. The changes of a secular kind, though very great in all this period, and alone moving the hearts of worldly men, could not destroy the Church, whose root is not in the world. The patience of the godly was exercised by them, the sins of the Church were scourged, and the Gospel was communicated to Barbarians. The general current of corrupt doctrine was strongly set in: idolatry was too deeply rooted in men's hearts, to be eradicated from any, except those who were Christians indeed, and we shall ere long see it established in the formality of public worship. Nothing, however, had hitherto happened, but what had been predicted. The persecutions of the Church,† the short interval of peace,‡ and the desolations of the empire which succeeded,§ had all been revealed to St. John. And it may deserve to be remarked, that even amidst all this degeneracy and decay, whoever chooses to

* Coloss. ii. 19. † Rev. vi. ‡ Ib. viii. 1. § Ib. viii.

compare Christian emperors or priests with Pagans in similar situations, will find a great superiority of character in the former. The meliorating of the condition of slaves, the abolition of tortures, and of other cruel or obscene customs, the institution of various plans for the relief of the poor, and the general improvement of the order of society, are to be attributed in a great measure to the benevolent influence and operation of the Christian religion.

CHAP. XII.

THE EASTERN CHURCH IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

THE life and transactions of Chrysostom have introduced us into this scene already, and prepared us to expect no very great work of the Spirit of God. The vices which tarnished the West, were superstition, polemical subtilty, and monasticism. These same vices, meeting with little or no check from the revival which took place in Africa, and spread a benign influence through the Latin churches, prevailed in the East almost universally, and each of them in a much higher degree; yet here and there, the Spirit of God condescended to move amidst the chaos, and it is our duty to watch and discern his operations.

Death of Arsaces, bishop of Constantinople, A. D. 405.

Arsaces, who was very old, and who had been appointed bishop of Constantinople in the room of Chrysostom, died in the year 405. In the next year Atticus, who had been a principal agent in the persecution of Chrysostom,* succeeded him. He seems a person extremely well adapted to an age and metropolis of formal and decent religion; neither so zealous as to give offence by his animadversions, nor so dissolute as to excite disgust by his immoralities. He understood mankind, had good sense; and though he had little learning,† yet he possessed the art of showing off that little

* It is very possible this expression may be too strong. The authority for it rests with Palladius, p. 95. The panegyrical biographer of Chrysostom might easily magnify the courtly connivance of Atticus into positive persecution.

† Socrates contradicts this; he will have it, that Atticus had much learning, piety, and prudence. I doubt not but he was largely possessed of the last quality. The consideration of the taste and spirit of an author, will explain these contradictions. Decency and good sense, not much of zealous godliness, appear to have been predominant in Socrates.

to the best advantage. So exquisite a courtier as he, would naturally gain over large numbers of the discontented; yet there were some, who chose rather to meet for worship in the open fields than to communicate with Atticus. This bishop used to compose sermons, which he recited from memory; at length he ventured to preach extempore, but he was not admired from the pulpit.

Atticus was certainly a person of a candid temper and beneficent disposition. It had been the custom to mention with honour the names of former bishops in the church; and, with a view to conciliate the friends of Chrysostom, he took care to have his name mentioned among the rest. He distributed alms to the poor of other churches besides his own, and sent three hundred pieces of gold to Calliopius, a presbyter of Nice, for the use of such poor as were not common beggars, but persons who were ashamed to beg, and also for the poor of any other communion besides that of the general church.* He said to Asclepias, bishop of the Novatians, "You are happy, who have for fifty years been employed in the service of the church;" and, on all occasions, he behaved with kindness to these dissenters, and very justly owned their faithfulness to the common cause of Christianity in the days of Constantius and Valens. Were all this liberality of sentiment and practice founded on Christian faith and love, it would doubtless be highly laudable in Atticus: such as he is, in virtues and vices, I have represented his character, and must leave him to that Being to whom judgment belongs. He died in the twenty-first year of his bishopric.

During the reign of Theodosius the younger, the son and successor of Arcadius, the Christians in Persia were persecuted grievously, says Theodoret; † were kindly protected, and allowed to propagate the Gospel there, says Socrates.‡ Very circumstantial details are given by both writers, perfectly conformable to this opposition of accounts. As both the writers were well-informed and credible, I judge, that both accounts may be true of different periods of the reign of Isdegerdes; and the more so, as the Persian Magi might have a great share of the king's confidence at one time, and

* Socrates, b. vii. c. 25. † Theod. b. v. c. 39.

‡ B. vii. c. 8.

not at another. And, as the persecution was occasioned by the indiscreet zeal of a Christian, it is most probable, that the favourable period was first in order. According to these views, the series of events seems summarily to have been as follows: Maruthas, bishop of Mesopotamia, acquired the favour of the Persian monarch, and notwithstanding the fraudulent arts of the Magi, almost persuaded him to be a Christian. But toward the end of his reign, a bishop, called Abdas, presuming probably on the royal favour, destroyed one of the temples, where the Persians adored the fire. The action was no less contrary to Christian meekness, than to moral prudence, and deserves to be noticed, as a warning to Christians in all ages, to unite the subtilty of the serpent with the innocence of the dove. Isdegerdes, on the complaint of the Magi, who only wanted such an advantage, sent for [Abdas,] and in soft terms complained of the injury, and ordered him to rebuild the temple. [Abdas] refused to comply, and Isdegerdes in a rage ordered all the Christian churches in his dominions to be destroyed. He had not himself any real degree of Christian light, to enable him to make allowances for the misconduct of an individual. Nor did it ever appear more plainly how unequally the Church of Christ contends with the world, since the mistake of one person laid the foundation of a cruel persecution of thirty years. Isdegerdes began it; and his son and successor Vararanes,* inflamed by the Magi, afflicted the Christians with outrageous barbarity.

The Magi procured orders to be issued out to the chiefs of the Saracens, subjects of Persia, to guard the roads, and to apprehend all Christians, that they might not fly to the Romans. Aspebetes, one of those chiefs, touched with compassion at their distress, on the contrary, assisted them in making their escape. Being accused of this at the court of Persia, he fled with his family to the Romans. He took along with him a number of Arabs, who, together with himself, received Christian baptism, and the real church of Christ probably received an accession from this event.

The afflicted Christians implored the aid of Theodosius, and their entreaties were seconded by the humanity of At-

* [Theodoret calls this Persian Sovereign, Gororanes, Socrates Vararanes.]

ticus, the bishop.* In the mean time, the Persian king sent to demand that the Christian fugitives should be delivered into his hands. To this the emperor would not consent, and a war was the consequence, in which, so far at least as Christianity is concerned, Theodosius had the advantage. An action of Acacius, bishop of Amida, on the frontiers of Persia, in the course of this war, deserves more praise than any military exploits whatever. The Romans† had taken seven thousand prisoners, whom they would not restore, and who were perishing by famime. The Persian king was much vexed at this, but knew not how to relieve them. Acacius, touched with the distress of the captives, assembled his clergy, and spake thus to them: "Our God has no need either of dishes or cups;—since, then, our Church has many gold and silver vessels from the liberality of the people, let us, by means of them, free and relieve these captive soldiers." In effect, he ordered the vessels to be melted down, paid the ransom of the Persians to the Roman soldiers, gave the captives provisions and necessaries for their journey, and sent them home to their king. This was to conquer in a Christian manner. The king desired personally to make his grateful acknowledgments to the bishop, who was accordingly directed by Theodosius to wait upon the monarch.

Theodosius had a reign of uncommon length, forty-one years, though he died at the age of forty-nine.‡ He was a feeble prince, and held the affairs of government with a remiss and negligent hand. The public, however, was benefited by the vigorous wisdom of his sister Pulcheria, who, though only two years older, maintained, by meekness and discretion, that ascendancy over him, which superior capacity always gives. I have no great matter before me concerning the real Church of Christ at present; and I am not disposed to add one more history, to the many already published, concerning superstitious and marvellous acts, the fame of which now abounded, especially in the East. Let us look, then, at the court of Constantinople a little, and see if we cannot discern some dim traces at least of the features of the Church.

* [Socrat. vii. c. 18. † Socrates, b. vii. 21.

‡ [Soz. ix. c. 1.]

Pulcheria devoted herself to a life of virginity, before she was quite fifteen, and persuaded her two sisters to do the same. At sixteen she took the title of Augusta, and as she had always the prudence to preserve her brother's honour, she governed in his name with much success; for she was the only descendant of the great and first Theodosius, who possessed any eminence of character. She accustomed her brother to pray frequently, to honour the ministers, and to be upon his guard against novelties in religion. He had the honour of completing the destruction of idolatrous temples and worship. The young emperor rose early to sing with his two sisters the praise of God. He had a great part of the Scriptures by heart, and could discourse of them with the bishops, like an aged minister.* He took great pains to collect the books of Scripture and their interpreters. His meekness and forgiveness of injuries were exceedingly great. Being once asked, why he never punished with death those who had injured him, "Would to God," "he replied, I could recal the dead to life." To another asking him of the same thing, he said, "It is an easy thing for a man to die, but it belongs to God alone, to recover life when departed, [should any change of mind take place."†] His clemency to criminals seems to have been excessive. In compliance with the customs, he exhibited, but with reluctance, the shows of the circus. In the midst of the exhibitions there was once a dreadful tempest; in consequence of which the emperor ordered the criers to warn the people, that it would be much better to leave the shows, and betake themselves to prayer. The motion was accepted: the emperor sang hymns as an example to the rest, and the whole assembly gave themselves up to devotion.

[The news of the destruction of the usurper John] arriving while he was exhibiting shows, a second time he persuaded the people, in the same manner, to leave their pleasures, and to join in prayer and praise.‡ He made a law, to forbid in every city even Jews and Pagans, to attend the theatre and the circus on the Lord's day, and on certain festivals. He made laws also to prevent the progress of

* Socrates, b. vii. 22.

† [The original here is ἐκ μεταυοίας ἀνακαλέσασθαι.] ‡ [Socrat. vii. c. 23.]

Judaism; but it ought to be added, that he prohibited the molestation of Jews or of Pagans, so long as they lived peaceably under the government. He reduced the penalty of death against heathenism to banishment and confiscation of goods. Such was Theodosius's zeal, which, if it contributed little to the propagation of vital godliness, was doubtless very efficacious in the promotion of external religion.

But, notwithstanding all the encomiums lavished on this emperor, who appears to have truly feared God in the main, it is evident, that the powers of his mind partook of the childish imbecility of his age. A monk, to whom he had refused a favour,* had the boldness to excommunicate him. Theodosius was so much affected, that he declared he would not touch a morsel, till the excommunication was removed. Though informed by the bishop of Constantinople, that he must not regard so irregular an excommunication, he could not be easy, till the monk was found and had restored him to communion. In what bondage did conscientious persons then live! but how little reason have those to triumph over them, who live without conscience, and shut their eyes against the light of the Gospel!

Sisinnius † succeeded Atticus at Constantinople, by the general desire of the people. He was a man of simple manners, courteous, and exceedingly liberal to the poor, a character much resembling his predecessor.

The virtue of mutual forbearance between the general church and dissenters prevailed beyond doubt at this time; the prudent and moderate characters of the bishops of both parties, as well as the uncommon meekness of the emperor, contributed much to this.‡ Could I add to this any clear account of the internal vigorous operations of divine grace, the glory of the Eastern church would have been seldom rivalled: but superstition corroded the vitals of practical religion. One remarkable event, belonging to the reign of Theodosius, deserves, however, to be recorded.§ A Jewish imposter, in Crete, pretended that he was Moses, and that

* Theodoret, v. [c. 37.] † [Socrat. vii. c. 26.]

‡ Let an instance of this be drawn from the funeral of Paul, bishop of the Novatians, whose corpse was attended to his grave with singing of psalms by Christians of all denominations. The man, for his holiness of life, had been held in universal estimation. [Socrat. vii. c. 46.]

§ [Socrat. vii. c. 38.]

he had been sent from heaven, to undertake the care of the Cretan Jews, and conduct them over the sea. He preached a whole year in the Island, with a view of inducing them to obey his directions. He exhorted them to leave all their substance, and promised to conduct them through the sea, as on dry land, and bring them into the land of promise. Numbers were so infatuated, as to neglect their business, and leave their possessions to any who chose to seize them. On the day fixed by the impostor, he went before them, and they followed with their wives and little ones. It was a memorable instance of that "blindness * which has happened to Israel till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," and fulfils the Scripture account of their penal folly. When he had led them to a promontory, he ordered them to throw themselves into the sea. None of them, it seems, had the caution, to insist on his setting the example. Those who were at the brink of the precipice leaped down, many of whom perished, partly dashed against the rocks, and partly drowned; and many more would have perished, had not a number of fishermen providentially been present, who saved their lives. These, enlightened at length by experience, prohibited the rest from taking the leap. And they all now sought the impostor, in order to destroy him: but he had made his escape. Many of the Cretan Jews were on this occasion brought over to the Christian faith.

Two controversies shook the churches of the East in this reign, on which far more has been written than tends to edification.† The first was the Nestorian, which was occasioned by the obstinacy of Nestorius, in objecting to a common phrase of the orthodox, namely, "Mary the mother of God." He seems to have regarded the union between the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ rather as moral than real, and to have preferred the idea of a connexion between the two natures to an union. As the last century had been remarkable for heresies, raised on the denial of the union of the three Persons in the Trinity, so this was disturbed by heresies, raised on the denial of the union of the divinity and humanity of the Son of God. Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, the opposer of Nestorius, seems, on the whole, to have expressed no more than the faith of

* Rom. xi. [25.]

† [Socrat. vii. c. 32. Evangr. i. c. 2, &c.]

the primitive church. But the serpentine wits of the East, favoured also by a language of exquisite subtilty and copiousness, found no end in cavilling. Eutyches,* the monk, raised a second hesesy, which denied the existence of two natures in the person of Jesus Christ. This extreme is opposite to that of Nestorius. How indecently and fiercely these controversies were agitated, how very little of practical godliness was applied to them by any party, and how much the peace of the church was rent, is well known. It belongs only to my purpose, and it is all the good which I can find in general to have resulted from the contests, to mention, that the doctrines of Scripture were stated by the two councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, † and by the writings of those who were most esteemed in the church at that time. Such was the provident care of Christ over his Church, in the preservation of the fundamental truths relating to his person, and the union of the two natures in it, that all attempts to remove them from the mind by explaining them according to men's own imaginations, were subverted; and the doctrine was transmitted safe to the Church in after-ages, as the food and nourishment of humble and self-denying souls. The writings of Leo, bishop of Rome, are deservedly admired for their strength and perspicuity in clearing up this subject.

Theodosius II. died in the year 450. His sister Pulcheria remaining sole mistress of the Eastern empire, gave her-
A. D. 450. self in marriage, for political reasons, to Marcian, whom she made emperor; nor does it appear that her religious virtues suffered any diminution till her death. Both Marcian ‡ and Pulcheria were as eminent for Christian piety as a superstitious age permitted persons of their exalted stations to be; and Marcian, who survived, died at the age of sixty-five, in the year 457, renowned for
A. D. 457. his services to religion. The preservation of orthodoxy, the encouragement of good morals, and the destruction of idolatry, were his favourite objects.

Of his successor Leo, it is remarkable, that he forbad any
A. D. 469. judiciary proceedings on the Lord's day, or any plays and games.§ This laws bears date 469.

* [Evagr. i. c. 9.] † [Evagr. ii. c. 4, and 18.]
‡ [Evagr. ii. c 1.] § [Excerpt. ex Eccl. Hist. Theod. Lect. l. i. p. 553.]

At so late a period did the full observance of the most ancient of all divine institutions receive the sanction of human authority ! * The same year he made a law against Simony, requiring men to be promoted to the episcopal office without their own choice, and declaring those, who are active in their endeavours for the promotion, to be unworthy of the office.

Gennadius, archbishop of Constantinople, died about the year 473 † The most remarkable thing I find in him is, that he never ordained any clergymen who could not repeat the Psalter without book. Gennadius dies, A. D. 473.

But I am disgusted with the prospect. It grows worse in the East to the end of the century. Doctrinal feuds and malignant passions involve the whole. Possibly in the view of some private and obscure scenes in the next Chapter, the reader may find something more worthy of his attention.

CHAP. XIII.

CHRISTIAN WRITERS OF THIS CENTURY.

THE great luminary of the fifth century has been copiously reviewed. The greatest praise of some of the rest is, that they illustrated and defended the evangelical views of faith and practice through him revived; yet amidst the gloom of superstition we may discover several rays of godliness, even among persons who had never read the bishop of Hippo.

MARK,‡ the hermit, lived about the beginning of this century. He wrote on the spiritual life, and describes the conflicts and labours of men truly serious for eternity. Many of the ascetical or mystic writers are tarnished with Semi-Pelagianism. Mark is in the main an humble advocate for the doctrines of grace, and feels the depravity and helplessness of human nature. He describes views of the spirituality of the Law and the grace of the Gospel; and, amidst all his care to promote practical godliness, he protests against the idea of our being justified by our works, as a very dan-

* See Genesis ii. † [Except. ex. Eccl. Hist. Theod. Lect. Lib. i. p. 554.]

‡ See Du Pin, from whom I derive particular information on subjects of this nature. [Niceph. xiv. c. 54. Soz. l. vi. c. 29.]

gerous notion. I regret that I can communicate no more of such a man. Even of his country I can find no account, except that he belonged to the Eastern church.

THEOPHILUS, bishop of Alexandria, the unrighteous persecutor of Chrysostom, does not deserve a place in this list on account of his writings, which are futile, and breathe a worldly spirit. But a reflection he made at the hour of his death may merit the attention of political and ambitious dignitaries of the church. "How happy," said he, "art thou Arsenius, to have had always this hour before thine eyes!"* which shows, said a writer of that time, that monks who retire from the world to mourn in the wilderness, die more peaceably than bishops, who go out of their dioceses to disturb the peace of the church by caballing at court. It seems that Theophilus had lived, as if he were never to die.

PAULINUS, of Nola, if not one of the most learned, was one of the most humble and pious writers of his time. † He was born at Bourdeaux about the year 353. He had a classical style and taste, and being of an illustrious family, had advanced to the greatest dignities of the empire. He married Therasia, a rich lady, by whom he obtained a great estate. It pleased God to inspire his wife with the love of heavenly things, and she had great influence in inducing her husband to prefer a retired life before the grandeur of the world. In the prosecution of this scheme there was as much of genuine piety, and as little of superstition, as in any saints of these times. He gradually parted with his wealth, and observed in one of his epistles, that it was to little purpose for a man to give up his worldly wealth, except he denied himself; and that a man might renounce the world heartily, who did not part with all his riches. The people of Barcelona in Spain,‡ where he lived in retirement, conceived so great an esteem for him, that they insisted on his ordination. He writes thus on the occasion to a friend.§ "On Christmas-day," said he, "the people obliged me to receive the order of priesthood, against my will: not that I have any aversion to the office; on the contrary, I could have wished to have begun

Paulinus of Nola, born, A. D. 353.

* [Dupin in Bibl. Theoph.]
† [Vit. D. Paulin, p. 655.]
‡ [Ep. Paulin. Alypio. 24. in Op. Augustin. et Paulin. Ep. 45.]
§ [Paulin. Ep. vi. ad Severum.]

at the porter's order, and so have gradually risen into the clerical—I submitted, however, to Christ's yoke, and am now engaged in a ministry beyond my merit and strength. —I can scarcely yet comprehend the weight of that dignity ; I tremble, when I consider its importance, conscious as I am of my own weakness : but he that giveth wisdom to the simple, and out of the mouths of sucklings perfects praise, is able to accomplish his work in me, to give me his grace, and to make me worthy, whom he called when unworthy." *

After this he lived sixteen years at Nola, in privacy, where at length he was ordained bishop in 409. The incursions of the Goths disturbed him for some time ; and on this occasion it was that he prayed in the manner that his friend Augustine tells us, that the Lord would not suffer him to be tormented on account of worldly goods, as he had long been weaned from them in his affections. It pleased God, that after the assault of Nola by the Goths was over, he peaceably enjoyed his bishopric till his death in 431.

Paulinus ordained bishop, A. D. 409.

Dies A. D. 431.

This holy person was intimately acquainted with Alipius, bishop of Tagasta, whom we have already celebrated as the townsman and friend of Augustine. Through this connexion he became acquainted with the writings of the bishop of Hippo, which were peculiarly adapted to the taste of one, who, like Paulinus, knew what indwelling sin means. Hence arose a very peculiar friendship between the two bishops, cemented by their common interest in the privileges and doctrines of the Gospel.

His letter to Amandus† gives an excellent view of his divinity, which he illustrates both from the Old and New Testament, much after the manner of the bishop of Hippo.

* This humble and serious language is the obvious effect of a spirit truly conscientious, deeply sensible of the holiness of God, and its own unworthiness. There is not any thing, in which primitive piety appears to more advantage, when compared to modern religion, than in a review of men's conduct with respect to the pastoral office. In our times it frequently happens that youths, who have really a religious cast, fancy themselves adequate to the most important of all offices, before they have attained the age of twenty. Parents also too often look on their dullest children, as competent to the sacred function ; and it is much to be feared, that worldly lucre is the spring that animates many to press into the ministry, who never had any charity for their own souls.

† [Ep. xxi.]

In writing to Delphinus,* who had been dangerously sick, he speaks of the benefit of afflictions to the righteous, as they exercise their godliness, keep them from pride, and imprint in them the fear of divine justice, which will dreadfully confound the ungodly, since it so severely chastises the righteous.

Paulinus was intimate with Sulpicius Severus, the historian, who was a priest of Agen, a person of noble birth, fine talents, and much superstition; a disciple of Martin of Tours. That he could unite so much elegance of the Roman language with so much childishness of thought, forms one of those inconsistencies, which abound in human nature. And yet there want not here and there in his History marks of good judgment, and every where a spirit of piety prevails. Paulinus, comparing Sulpicius's conversion with his own, prefers that of his friend,† "because," said he, in one of his letters, "he had at once shaken off the yoke of sin, and broken the bands of flesh and blood in the flower of his age; and at a time when he was renowned at the bar, and in the career of worldly honour, he despised human greatness, that he might follow Jesus Christ, and preferred the preaching of fishermen before all the pieces of Ciceronian eloquence."

Severus had desired to have Paulinus's picture. The bishop of Nola refused, and called his request a piece of folly. He takes occasion, however, to give a picture of his own heart. Here is one passage of it, much admired by Augustine: ‡ "How should I dare to give you my picture, who am altogether like the earthly man, and by my conduct represent the carnal person? On every side shame oppresses me. I am ashamed to have my picture drawn as I am, and I dare not consent to have it made otherwise. I hate what I am, and I am not what I would wish to be. But what avails it me, wretched man, to [hate] evil and love good, since I [do] what I hate, and sloth hinders me from endeavouring to do what I love? I find myself at war with myself, and am torn by an intestine conflict. The flesh fights against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The law of the body [by the law of sin] opposes the law of the spirit. Wo is me, because I have not taken away the taste of the poisoned tree, by that of the saving cross. The

* [Ep. xviii.] † [Augustin. Ep. 186.] ‡ [Ep. i.]

poison communicated to all men from our first parent by his sin yet abideth in me."*

In a letter to Florentius, bishop of Cahors, the reader may perhaps find an objection obviated, which might arise from the last article, namely, How can a man, who finds himself so miserable, enjoy any consolation? "Jesus Christ, says he, is the rock containing that spring of living water, which we happily find not far from us, when we are very thirsty in this world: this is that which refreshes us, and prevents us from being consumed by the heat of concupiscence. This is the rock on which the house is founded, that shall never fall. This is the rock, which being opened at the side, casts out water and blood, to make us taste of two wholesome fountains, the water of grace, and the blood of the sacrament, which proves at once both the source and the price of our salvation."

In another letter† to Augustine, he discourses on the felicity of the saints after the resurrection. "All their employment shall then be, to praise God everlastingly, and to give him continual thanks."

This holy bishop was the delight of his age.‡ He led a retired and temperate life, but with no great austerity; singularly remarkable for the tenderness of his conscience, the meekness of his spirit, and a constant sense of his own imbecility, and of the need of divine grace.

ISIDORE§ of Pelusium in Egypt, spent his whole life in the monastic state, and he did honour to a course of life by no means the wisest. He lived in the practice of serious piety, and, by a number of letters which he has left, he appears to have known the world much better, and to have been more useful to the Church, and to society, than might have been expected from a monk.

* All this is the peculiar language of a Christian, arising from just views of indwelling sin in its nature and its constant influence. Paulinus describes from the heart such things as none but a truly enlightened mind can know: for original sin is not known at all, except by experience. I need not say to the evangelized reader, how consonant this language is to that of the best men in the Old Testament, and in the New. And although decent Pharisees may be inclined to think it excessive, I will add, that it is even too faint for the occasion. Every real Christian knows that no words can sufficiently describe the strength of internal corruption. Hence humility, the faith of Christ, the preciousness of the Gospel to the mind, and all the true holiness which is exercised under the sun; and uniformly it appears, that men who know the most of native wickedness, are the most holy in their lives and conversations.

† [Ep. xciv. in Op. Augustin.]

‡ [Vid. Augustin. Ep. xxvii.]

§ [Evagrii Hist. l. i. c. 15.]

He observes on the Holy Scriptures,* that there is a divine wisdom in ordering some things to be very plain, and others obscure, at once to encourage our investigation, and to check our presumption. He gives good rules for the exposition of Scripture,† guards against fanciful interpretations of concise expressions, where the connexion has not been considered, and teaches us not to attempt to draw the mysteries of the Gospel from every passage of the Old Testament. He agrees with the orthodox in the great doctrines of the Gospel; his views of divine grace are sound in the main, but escape not the taint of Semi-Pelagianism, which seems to have prevailed over the Eastern church: the doctrine of the African luminary never making any great progress among the Greek churches.

His conduct on occasion of the Nestorian controversy was admirable. He endeavoured to heal the ferocious spirits of the disputants, and condemned the tempers of those, whose doctrines he yet admitted to be sound.

The great excellence of this writer is his practical rules. For a specimen, take his advice to a physician who lived wickedly.‡ "You profess a science requiring much wisdom; but you act inconsistently: you cure small wounds for others, and heal not your own distempers, which are great and dangerous. Begin at home."

CASSIAN § was a monk from his childhood, and spent the latter part of his life at Marseilles. He has been before mentioned as the Father of Semi-Pelagianism. His plausible views of moderation led him into inextricable confusion. He allows that grace is necessary even for the beginning of faith. Yet he affirms that man can naturally choose good, but needs grace to accomplish it. He thinks that sometimes grace, and sometimes the will of man, is the first mover. The cases of St. Paul and St. Matthew seem to him to illustrate the first position; those of Zaccheus and the penitent thief the second. In such endless jargon is a sensible man involved, while he vainly mixes opposite things, and forgets the Scripture declaration, "if by grace, then is it no more

Cassian the monk.

[Collat. 13.]

* [Lib. iv. Ep. 82.]

† [Lib. iii. Ep. 292. Lib. i. Ep. 24. Lib. ii. Ep. 63, 93, 254. Lib. iii. Ep. 125, and 136.]

‡ [Lid. i. Ep. 391, and 437.]

§ [Gennad. de Vir. illust c. 61.]

of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." Yet his system has since been adopted by many of the more decent sort of Christian professors, and will, whatever may be said, recommend itself to all of them, who are unacquainted with the entire depravity of human nature. In him, Semi-Pelagianism found a very powerful guardian, because his learning and morals were unquestionably respectable. And it happens in this case, that a system which discovers its absurdity and extreme inconsistency to every man endued with any real degree of self-knowledge, exhibits a most plausible appearance in theory, and seems to shun the opposite rocks of self-righteousness and Antinomianism. So it pretends;* "but wisdom is justified of her children."

Cœlestine bishop of Rome.

CŒLESTINE, bishop of Rome, has already been noticed as supporting Prosper and Hilary, disciples of Augustine in Gaul, against the intrusions of Semi-Pelagianism. He reproved those French bishops who favoured the doctrines of Cassian, and he published some articles concerning grace, of which a summary has already been given. The earnestness of his manner shows that he felt what he said; and his testimony to the bishop of Hippo deserves to be recorded.† "We have always had Augustine, of blessed memory, in our communion, whose life and merit is well known; his fame hath been unblemished, and his knowledge is so indisputable,

* Cassian wrote monastic rules and institutions, in which he teaches "for doctrines, the commandments of men." He instructs the poor monks in the duties of implicit submission, and of voluntary humility, by which their understandings would rather be enslaved, than any true mortification of sin acquired. In nothing does the system of Augustine triumph more sensibly over that of Cassian, than in this point of view. I conceive these two men both engaged in the design of leading men to a holy life. With superstition they both were infected. But in Cassian the fashionable evil prevails, reduces itself into a system, and leads the devotees into a tedious number of artificial externals, with an intention to break the human will, and force it into something like virtue. What, for instance, can be more absurd than his directions to the young probationer, to subject himself absolutely to the will of his superior in the convent? To submit to orders in a manner impossible to be executed, to endure hardships and crosses, without any reason but the arbitrary will of a master? Follies which, in the papacy, have continued for ages after. But see Augustine. His system leads him to stem a torrent of superstition: to attempt, at least to emancipate Christians from the yoke of bondage: to teach true, not fictitious, internal not merely external, humility: to lead the soul to Christ, to instruct men in love, to enforce Christian practice from spiritual motives: in fine, to aim at purity of heart, and heavenly-mindedness.

† [Ep. Cœlest. ad Galliarum Episcop. c. 2.]

that my predecessors have looked upon him as one of the most excellent teachers of the Church. All orthodox Christians have ever thought well of him; and he hath been generally reverenced through the whole world." The church of Rome, though at this time much degenerated from primitive purity, must not, however, be deemed antichristian, while the real doctrines of Christ were supported in it. And though secular ambition was gradually making its way among her bishops, yet some of them were real good men and faithful pastors; and I am willing to believe that Cœlestine was of the number.

See the zeal and uprightness of this bishop, in the subject of episcopal ordination.* A person, named Daniel, who had come from the East, retired into France. The monastery where he lived accused him of scandalous crimes. Yet he had the address to get himself ordained a bishop in that country. Cœlestine, in vain, had endeavoured to prevent this. He blames the bishop who had ordained him, and declares, that he had lost the episcopal dignity himself by ordaining one so unworthy. It does not appear that he fulminated a decree of excommunication against him. The superior dignity of the bishop of Rome in the Western world was hitherto rather founded on the opulence of the see, and the civil importance of the city of Rome, than on any positive claims of dominion. Cœlestine's conduct was more like that of a Christian bishop than of a pope. He found fault with the conduct of the hierarchy in France, in raising at once to the episcopal office † laymen who had not gone through the several gradations of the priesthood. He ‡ DECREES, that when a bishop is to be chosen, the clergy of the same church, whose characters are known, and who have deserved well, be preferred to strange and unknown clergymen; that a bishop be not imposed on any people against their consent, but that the votes and agreement of the clergy, people, and magistrates, be followed; that no clergyman be chosen out of another

* [Cœlest. Ep. 2.] † Fleury, b. xxiv. 56.

‡ I use reluctantly the word Decree, because for some time the admonitions of the bishop of Rome had gone by the name of Decretals; though certainly as yet, bishops, out of Italy at least, were not under his jurisdiction. However, the imperative style of the Roman bishops at this time is indefensible, and intimates the too great growth of their power.

diocese, when there is any one in the same church fit to be ordained bishop.

The same soundness of judgment which led Cœlestine to oppose interested ordinations, and the undue interference of secular ambition, induced him also to oppose the democratic spirit; as appears from his letter * to the bishops of Calabria and Apulia, whom he forbids to ordain laymen bishops on the demand of the people. "When this demand is against the rules of the Church, it should never be complied with." †

The three contemporary Greek historians, who continued ecclesiastical history where Eusebius ended, through the fourth and part of the fifth century, are Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret of Cyrus. I have made use of them all along, and find them particularly serviceable, where I have not the much more satisfactory lights of the fathers themselves, whose transactions are recorded. The first is doubtless a judicious writer,‡ remarkable for his candour to the Novatians, and for a generous peaceable temper. Neither he nor Sozomen furnish us with sufficient documents, from which a decisive judgment of their own personal characters may be formed. The latter§ is less judicious, and very fond of monks. The third,‖ however, surpasses all men in admiration of monastic institutions, and is credulous beyond measure in subjects of that nature. Yet was he himself one of the most learned and best men in the Eastern church. His pacific conduct displeased the bigots, during the noise of the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies. It is evident, that his own views were orthodox; but because he inclined to healing methods, he was condemed at one of the synods, and was not without difficulty reinstated. Hear him speak in his letter to Leo of Rome, which will give us an epitome of his character and story.¶ "I have been a bishop these twenty-six years without reproach. I have brought over to the Church above a thousand Marcionites and many Arians. There is not now an heretic in the

Character of Theodoret.

Condemned in the Synod of Ephesus.

* Cœlest. Ep. 3. ad Aput. et Calabr. Episcop.]

† Cœlestine succeeded Boniface I. A.D. 423: died in 432. He sent Deputies to the third General Council held at Ephesus, in June 431.

‡ [Phot. c. 28.] § [Phot. c. 30.] ‖ [Phot. c. 31, and 46.]

¶ Fleury, xxvii. 44. [Ep. ap. S. Leon. 113. c. 2—7.]

eight hundred parishes of my diocese. Often have I been assaulted with stones, and have sustained combats with Pagans and Jews. Reject not, I beseech you, my humble prayer, nor despise my old age, loaded with disgrace, after so many labours. God is my witness, that I am not concerned for my own honour, but on account of the scandal given, and lest several of the ignorant, and particularly of the converted heretics should look on me as heretical, seeing the authority of those who have condemned me; and without considering that for so many years of my episcopacy, I have neither acquired house, nor land, nor money, but have embraced a voluntary poverty."

Restored at the Fourth General Council held at Chalcedon, A.D. 451.

He was born at Antioch,* in the year 386, and ordained bishop of Cyrus, a city of Syria, by the bishop of Antioch, about the year 420. The inhabitants spake chiefly the Syriac tongue, few of them understood Greek; and heathenish ignorance prevailed among them. The most shining part of Theodoret's character appeared in his pastoral employments. He laboured, and suffered for the love of Christ, and was often in danger of his life from the rage of the multitude. But God gave success to his endeavours in the manner stated above, and he found, what persevering pastors often find, the love of his people to attend him at his latter end. He resided constantly in his diocese, and no doubt was signally useful in it, by preaching and by example. When called, which was but seldom, by the superior bishop or patriarch of Antioch, to attend his synod, he went and preached on those occasions at Antioch in a manner that left a deep impression. All the time he was bishop, he had no suits at law with any man, nor did he or his clergy ever appear at the judgment-seats. His liberality was unbounded; and in every part of Christian morals he appears to have exhibited that peculiar spirit which none but true Christians are able to do.

Theodoret born at Antioch, A.D. 386.

Ordained bishop of Cyrus, A.D. 420.

The authority of Leo, bishop of Rome, was of service to him in the persecution before spoken of; and he died peaceably in his bishopric; though calumny and prejudice after his death prevailed so far as to procure his condemnation in the time of Justinian. His works are large, on a

* [Niceph. 14. c. 54.]

variety of subjects; but they speak not for him equally with his life; and it will be sufficient to say, that his theology, with a strong mixture of superstition, was of the same kind as that of Chrysostom. But his spirit was humble, heavenly, charitable; and he seems to have walked in the faith, hope, and love, of the Gospel, a shining ornament in a dark age and country.

LEO,* bishop of Rome, was one of the greatest men of his time. In secular affairs, his successful negotiations have already been noticed. In the church, it must be owned that he took much pains concerning matters of discipline; that so far as appears from circumstances, he supported the cause of truth and uprightness in general, though with a constant attention to the amplification of the Roman See. Antichrist was not yet risen to its stature; but was growing apace. He attempted to extend his influence in France, but met with a firm resistance. The celibacy of the clergy was more strictly enforced by him than by any bishop of Rome before. Yet, in Christian doctrine he was not only evangelical in general, but also in a very elaborate and perspicuous manner, so as to evince the pains he had taken to understand the Scriptures. His letter to the Eastern churches, on the divine and human nature of Christ, is allowed to have been remarkably scriptural. He opposed Pelagianism with much zeal; he detected the invasions of its defenders, who made grace the effect of human merits; and he resolved every thing into the grace of God in so full and clear a manner, that if his own heart was influenced by the sentiments which he espoused, he must have been an humble, holy Christian. But his piety was not so unquestionable as his capacity and accuracy of sentiment. Candour, however, will rather incline to impute what is suspicious in his conduct, to the times, than to his disposition. Leo justly reproved the great and scandalous violations of order and decorum in the African ordinations of bishops, which preceded the invasion of Genseric. And he has left us several decrees, from which the reader may collect what were the ancient ideas of pastoral and ecclesiastical discipline.

Leo made bishop of Rome, A.D. 440.

"What,"† says this prelate, "can be the meaning of lay-

* [Gennad. de Vir. illust. c. 70.]

† [Ep. 87. ad Episcop. per Maurit. Cæs. c. 1.]

ing hands SUDDENLY on any man; but the conferring of priests' orders on persons of whose worth we are ignorant, before we have had time to try them; before they have approved themselves competent by their industry, and have given some tokens of knowledge and experience?"

He is of opinion, that pastors should have passed through all the inferior orders, and have exercised them for some time, before they be appointed bishops.

He declares,* that those who have not been chosen by the clergy, nor desired by the people, nor ordained by the bishops of the province, with the consent of the metropolitan, are not to be accounted bishops.

"He ought to be chosen bishop, who is chosen by the clergy and people.† In case their judgment be divided, the metropolitan should prefer him who is of greatest worth, and hath most votes. But no man should be appointed bishop whom the people refuse."

"He,‡ who would go from one church to another, out of contempt of his own, shall be deprived both of that which he hath, and of that which he would have; that he may neither preside over those whom, through avarice, he hath desired, nor those whom, through pride, he hath despised."

Bishop Leo himself preached and fed his flock at Rome; and a number of his sermons are yet extant. The faith of the church, concerning the union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, was not neglected, in the course of his ministry. This was still the prevailing doctrine, notwithstanding the subtil and manifold opposition made to it. Leo himself was one of the ablest instruments of its vindication; and whether it is probable that he was so only in a speculative manner, let the reader judge from the following passage of his ninth sermon on the Nativity. "For unless faith believe, that both substances were united in one person, language explains it not; and therefore matter for divine praise never fails, because the abilities of him who praises never suffice. Let us rejoice, then, that we are unequal to speak of so great a mystery of our mercy; and when we are not able to draw forth the depth

* [Ep. 92. ad Rust. Narb. c. 1.] † [Ep. 84. ad Anast. Thess. c. 5.]

‡ [Ep. ad Episcop. Thrac. this is supposed not to be a letter of Leo Bishop of Rome but of Leo Bishop of Baturicæ and that it should be entitled ad Episcop. Tertiæ i. e. Provinciæ.]

of our salvation, let us feel that it is good for us to be vanquished in our researches. For no man more approaches to the knowledge of the truth, than he who understands, that in divine things, though he makes much proficiency, something always remains for him to investigate." Leo dies, A.D. 461.

HILARY,* bishop of Arles,† was the successor of Honoratus in that see. The latter was abbot of the monastery of Lerins,‡ an isle of France, famous in those days for its monks. He took pains to draw Hilary into serious Christianity, which in these times was too much connected with the monastic life. Honoratus himself was afterwards chosen bishop of Arles, and his disciple Hilary was unanimously elected to succeed him. Hilary has left us the Life of Honoratus; in which he vindicates the custom of writing encomiums on deceased holy men. He says, with a happy inconsistency, for he must be considered as a Semi-Pelagian, "God is praised in his saints, as all their worth and excellency ought to be imputed to the Author of Grace." An excellent sentiment, and truly Christian! Let it only be firmly and consistently maintained, and let it influence the heart; men then must be humble, the grace of Christ must engage their whole dependence; and they, who hold in sentiment the doctrines of Cassian, will only be found to be illogically defective in their arguments, not unsound in their practical views. However, the fashionable prevalence of the sentiments of Cassian in France, and the plausible support which they received from several highly respected characters, besides Hilary of Arles, would no doubt have a pernicious effect on the minds of the next generation. Hilary, bishop of Arles.

No fault can be found with Hilary's writing the life of a saint. But the manner of his doing it, though unhappily by no means singular, is to be blamed. With him, Honoratus is all excellency, and looks more like an angel than a

* [Gennad. de Vir. illust. c. 69.]

† This is not the Hilary, who, in conjunction with Prosper, supported in France the doctrine of Augustine, concerning grace. His sentiments approach more to Semi-Pelagianism; yet he deserves a place in these memoirs, because he held, implicitly at least, the fundamentals of divine truth; was truly humble and pious; and evidenced to all men, that he was a sincere member of the Church of Christ.

‡ Now called St. Honorat, or Honore de Lerin.

man. Suffice it just to mention the circumstances of his exit. He fell into a languishing distemper, which yet hindered him not from executing his priestly office. He preached in the church in the year 429, but his disease increasing, he died a few days after. Hilary bears witness to the piety of his last hours, having been present with him.

Honoratus dies, A. D. 429.

The life of Hilary himself is written, it is supposed, by Honoratus,* bishop of Marseilles, with the same partial exaggerations. Yet some circumstances are mentioned which bear strong marks of credibility. He often admonished in private the governor of the city, whose conduct had been very faulty, and seeing him one day come into church with his guards, he brake off in the midst of his discourse, and said, that those, who disregarded private admonitions, were unworthy of public. It is recorded, to the praise of this bishop, that, though he knew how to address the most polished auditory, and occasionally showed great literary powers, he could, however, adapt himself in the plainest manner to the apprehensions of the vulgar: a rare, but precious talent of a preacher, and surely more dependent on the heart than the head. The labours of this holy person were very great, and in preaching he was so zealous, that he was obliged to check himself by a sign agreed on, lest he should carry his discourse to too great a length. Prosper candidly allows, that his life and death were holy. Leo, of Rome, who had an unhappy quarrel with him in his lifetime, spake honourably of him after his death. I have only to regret that I have it not in my power to gratify the reader with more particulars of the labours and works of so pious a man, and so zealous a preacher.

Hilary died, A. D. 449.

VINCENTIUS,† of the same monastery of Lerins, was likewise renowned for his piety. He left behind him a treatise on the marks of heresy. With him, besides the testimony of Scripture, universality and antiquity are added as essential and concurring re-

Vicentius of Lerins.

* See page 321 of this Vol.

† [It is from this author that we have the well-known precept. "In ipsâ Catholicâ Ecclesiâ magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod *ubique*, quod *semper*, quod *ab omnibus* creditum est" about which so much has at different times been written.]

quisites of the evidence of orthodoxy ; and though popery can by no means stand the test of these, (for it had not as yet properly existed in the church,) it has notwithstanding availed itself of his rules, and pressed them into her service.

EUCHERIUS, of Lyons, is another of the same stamp, and his excellent life and death are attested by Prosper. Eucherius Bp. of Lyons, A. D. 434. Died, 450.

PROSPER, of Ries in Aquitain, was a layman who distinguished himself in this century in the defence of the doctrines of grace. He largely extracted from Augustine's works the fundamentals of his positions ; and wrote with much earnestness a defence of them. He was engaged in a laboured controversy with the Semi-Pelagians in France ; but controversy, managed with a spirit like his, serious, candid, and argumentative, not abusive and censorious, and conversant on topics of real importance, is an advantage, not a detriment to the cause of true religion. He bears a cheerful testimony to the solid piety of several of his opponents in France, as we have seen already, and appears only zealous for divine truths, and not for any particular party. It was an advantage to the truth revived by Augustine, that under the cautious and judicious management of Prosper, it was cleared of objections, and explained, and rescued from aspersions, without losing any thing of its sterling purity. Of Prosper himself, I can say nothing ; except that his writings speak for his piety, humility and integrity. Suffice it to give two or three quotations,* one of which obviates the most specious objections that have been made to the sentiments of Augustine :† " Setting aside that distinction which the divine knowledge confines within the secret of eternal justice, we ought most sincerely to believe and profess, that God would have all men to be saved ; since the apostle, whose sentence this is, most earnestly directs, what in all churches is most [piously] observed, that prayer be made to God for all men: whence, that many perish, is the desert of those who perish ; that many are saved, is the gift of the Saviour.‡

* Pro. Aug. doct. [responsiones Prosp. Aquit.]

† [Prosp. Aquit. pro Augustin. resp. ad Object. 2. Vincent.]

‡ The attentive reader has seen this to be the sentiment of the anonymous author of the Calling of the Gentiles. Perhaps no two propositions

"Let human debility," says he, "acknowledge itself, and the condemned succession of all generations in the first man; and when the dead are quickened, the blind illuminated, the ungodly justified, let them confess Jesus Christ their life, and light, and righteousness." *

"We act with liberty, but with liberty redeemed, over which God is the governor." †

"Grace does more than persuade and teach by kind advice and exhortation; it changes also the mind within, and forms it anew, and from a broken vessel makes it new in the energy of creation. This, not the admonitions of the Law, not the words of a prophet, not nature so studiously preferred to her, performs. He only who made, renews. An apostle may run through the world, preach, exhort, plant, water, rebuke, and be urgent; but that the hearer may benefit by these means, neither the scholar, nor the teacher effects, but GRACE alone.—This orders the seed of faith to take root in the mind, this keeps and cherishes the harvest to maturity.—It is God who raises the dead, frees the prisoners, pours understanding into dark hearts, and infuses love, by which we love him again; and the love which he infuses is himself." ‡

Once more; hear his vigorous testimony to the entire depravity of nature, from a practical sense of which, he was, I doubt not, led to see the suitableness of his views of grace to the exigencies of fallen humanity.

"The mind, which originally had light from the Supreme Light, involves the will in darkness, and leaving the light, chooses to grow black in earthly darkness; nor can it voluntarily lift up its captive eyes on high, because, by the robbery of the tyrant, it hath even lost the knowledge of the greatness of the wound under which it lies prostrate." §

Primasius a disciple of Augustine.

PRIMASIUS was an African bishop, who for some years attended the ministry of Augustine, whose views he followed, as appears from his writings, particularly his comments on St. Paul's epistles. But

are more certainly and decisively scriptural than these two of Prosper. It is the vain attempt to clear them of a supposed inconsistency, which has confounded many reasoners. The Church of England has exactly hit this medium in all her public writings. To know where to stop is true wisdom.

* [Epist. ad Ruf. c. 7.] † [Carmen de Ingratis c. 45.]
‡ [Carmen de ingratis c. 14, and 15.] § [Ibid. c. 40.]

though he seems conversant in the writings of Augustine and Jerome, he is not a mere copyist, but discovers an original vein of thought, and appears to have been well furnished with polite learning. He says,* "Faith is the gift of God, and is infused by the secret inspiration of grace, not by human labour, nor by nature, but by the Holy Spirit." He vehemently opposes self-righteous sentiments, and defends with much accuracy the genuine doctrines of the Gospel. It is surprising, that of so able a writer, we should have no account with respect to his life and transactions.†

TIMOTHEUS ÆLURUS, bishop of Alexandria, wrote nothing worthy of a distinct memorial.‡ I mention him only as an instance of the unhappy state of that once flourishing Christian city. It had a succession of turbulent, ambitious bishops: the bad effect on the inhabitants was but too fully evidenced by their conduct: they had murdered his predecessor, and the way which he took to fix himself in his See, was by flattering them in their vices. I scarcely remember any thing good of Alexandria in all this century. It seems to have been precipitating itself into the darkness of Mahometanism, which God was preparing for it as a scourge on account of its dreadful abuse of the light of the Gospel.

SALVIAN,§ priest of Marseilles, was an eloquent, neat and beautiful writer. His manner is very serious, and he presses the necessity of good works, and particularly of almsgiving, with great vehemence. He excels in vindicating the judgments of God on the wicked nominal Christians of his time. But of his acquaintance with real Christianity, from the scanty materials which I have seen of him, I find no evidence.

HONORATUS,‖ bishop of Marseilles, is celebrated as a great extempore preacher; his ministry was much attended by clergy and people, and he was desired often to preach in other churches. Gelasius, bishop of Rome, had a high esteem for him. These accounts may seem simple and mean; but much

Honoratus, the bishop of Marseilles, died about A. D. 594.

* [Comment in Ep. ad Rom. c. 3, and 4, and 8, and 12.]

† Centur. Magdeb. Century v. c. x.

‡ [Gennad. de Vir. illust c. 72. Evagrii Hist. l. 2. c. 8. Theod. Lect. i. p. 552, and 3.] § [Gennad. de Vir. illust. 67.] ‖ [Gennad. de Vir. illust. c. 99.]

evidence arises from them, that true religion had some prevalence in France in this century. Much preaching and much controversy on matters of evangelical importance, though attended with evils, prove that Christ is present by his Spirit.

FAUSTUS,* bishop of Ries, was an Englishman, and was first a monk of the monastery of Lerins, of which he was chosen abbot. After the death of Maximus, bishop of Ries, he was chosen his successor. He composed several treatises, governed his diocese unblamably, led a holy life, and died regretted and esteemed by the church. Though, in the controversy which has so much called for our attention in this century, he favoured the Semi-Pelagians, he seems to have done so rather through fear of the abuses of predestination, and a misunderstanding of the consequences of Augustine's doctrine, than through the want of piety and humility. For he composed a treatise concerning Saving Grace, in which he showed that the grace of God always allures, precedes, and assists the human will, and that all the reward of our labour, is the gift of God. A priest, named Lucidus, was very tenacious of the sentiments of Augustine, and was opposed at least by the greater part of the French bishops in his neighbourhood. Faustus endeavoured to correct his ideas, by suggesting, that we must not separate grace and human industry; that we must abhor Pelagius, and yet detest those who believe that a man may be in the number of the elect without labouring for salvation. He adds many other cautionary maxims of the same kind, to which no sober and judicious follower of Augustine will object. His treatment of Lucidus is gentle and candid. Hence I wonder not that the presbyter was induced, at the council which was called, to assent to all that was required of him.

On the whole, after a careful review of the lights of antiquity on this subject, it appears to me, that there were a number of serious and pious persons on both sides of the question in France; that the controversy was carried on with a degree at least of moderation; that men, who really feared God, and lived by faith on his Son, in practical humility, differed rather in words than in things, while they

* [Gennad. de Vir. illust. c5.]

debated on this difficult subject; that yet the views of Augustine are scriptural, and most consistent, and would in all ages be allowed so to be, if men had a sufficient degree of patient attention to distinguish his positions from the abuses which may be made of them; that the Semi-Pelagian notions have, however, been held by men, whose experience was contradictory to their sentiments, men truly pious and holy; but, that the danger of these notions (as all errors on subjects relating to grace must be dangerous) lies in the bad use, which persons unacquainted with the operations of the Holy Spirit will be sure to make of them. France was at this time divided between the two parties; but as ignorance of true religion increased, Augustine's views of grace grew less and less fashionable, and were confined to particular situations, while wickedness flourished.

I add only, that profaneness has no right to triumph on account of these controversies. Their existence, and the serious and charitable manner of conducting them, showed that real godliness was alive in that country; nor is it probable, that there was, in any part of the world, at that time, more genuine piety than in France. When men are silent on topics of divine grace, when they gladly listen to the sneers of secular writers, who affect to treat all the controversialists with equal contempt, and are content to think so superficially on religion, as to live without any determinate sentiments on the doctrines of Scripture, then is the time when wickedness will reign without a check; and then what is called philosophy will domineer. God hath left such a people, for the present at least, to their own imaginations.

VICTOR, of Vita, of whose affecting history of the African persecutions I have made much use, and who himself suffered for righteousness' sake, will deserve to be added to this list. Victor.

Of GELASIUS, bishop of Rome, no more needs to be added to what has been said, than that he wrote zealously against Pelagianism. Gelasius.

JULIAN POMERIUS,* a priest in France about the end of this century, deserves attention for his practical works. A few sentences, descriptive of the Julian Pomerius.

* [Gennad. de Vir. illust. c. 98. et Isidor. Hisp. c. 12.]

characters of good and bad bishops and preachers, will show the taste of the times, as well as afford some sentiments not uninteresting to the pastors of this day.

"A wicked bishop seeks after preferment and riches; chiefly aims to gratify his passions, to confirm his authority, and to enrich himself.* He avoids the laborious and humbling part of his office, and delights in the pleasant and the honourable." Julian applies to such men's consideration the views of the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. "A good bishop converts sinners to God by his preaching and example—lastly, he holds himself fast to God only, in whom alone he puts his trust."†

The difference between a good and a bad preacher he thus lays down: "The one seeks the glory of Jesus Christ, by explaining doctrines in familiar discourse. The other uses the utmost strength of his eloquence to gain reputation. The latter handles trifles with elaborate language; the former elevates a plain discourse by the weight of his thoughts." ‡

CENTURY VI.

CHAP. I.

THE LIFE OF FULGENTIUS, AND THE STATE OF THE AFRICAN CHURCHES IN HIS TIME.

In the year 495, a storm began again to lower over the African Churches. Thrasamond, whose reign then commenced, as obstinate in Arianism as Huneric, but more sagacious and less bloody, mingled the arts of gentleness and severity against them. On the one hand he strove to gain over the orthodox by lucrative motives, on the other he forbad the ordination of bishops in the vacant Churches. § Eugenius, whose faithfulness was so severely

Thrasamond, king of the Vandals in Africa, begins his reign, A. D. 495.

* [Lib. de Vit. Contempl. c. 21.] † [Ibid c. 25.]

‡ [Lib. i. de Vit. Contempl. c. 24. The treatise de Vitâ Contemplativâ is printed among the works of Prosper to whom at one time it was attributed.]

§ See Fleury, b. xxx. [c. 57.]

tried in the former persecution, had been called to sleep in Jesus before the commencement of this. The African bishops showed however that divine grace had not forsaken them. They determined unanimously not to obey an order, which threatened the extinction of orthodoxy. They ordained bishops, and filled the vacant Sees, though they foresaw the probability of Thrasamond's resentment. But they thought it their duty to take care of their flocks at this hazard, rather than to seem to consent to the king's unrighteous prohibitions. Thrasamond, enraged, determined to banish them all. Fulgentius about that time was chosen bishop of Ruspæ. In him we behold another instance of the effects of the religion revived under Augustine. Fulgentius's life is written by one of his disciples, and dedicated to Felician, a bishop, who was the successor of Fulgentius. The review of it, and of his own works, will give us a specimen of the power of divine grace victoriously struggling under all the disadvantages of monastic superstition, and the childish ignorance of a barbarous age. Fulgentius * was descended from a noble family in Carthage, where his father was a senator. His grandfather Gordian, flying from the arms of Huneric, retired into Italy. After his decease, two of his sons, returning into Africa, now settled under the Vandal government, found their family-mansion possessed by the Arian clergy. By royal authority however they received part of their patrimony, and retired to [the province of Byzacium † and there in the city of] Tellepte, Fulgentius was born, being the son of Claudius, one of the brothers, and of Marriana, a Christian lady, who, being soon left a widow, gave her son a very liberal education ; and thus his mind became stored with Greek and Roman learning. As he increased in religious seriousness, he inclined more and more to a monastic life, for which he gradually prepared himself by successive austerities in Africa, [even whilst he continued to reside with his mother and after no long time] he was received into the monastery of Faustus, a bishop

Thrasamond persecutes with severity.

* [Vit. b. Fulgentii c. 1.]

† [The East of Africa Propria was called Byzacium, the reading in some copies is Byzantium, which led Milner to suppose that they went to Constantinople, but as Tellepte was in Africa, this is clearly a mistake and I have therefore altered the text.]

whom the Arian persecution had banished from his diocese to a place contiguous to it, where he erected his monastery. The spirit and fashion of the times so transported him, that at first, he refused even to see his own mother who came to visit him, though he afterwards behaved to her with the greatest filial duty. He underwent severe bodily sufferings from the renewal of the Arian persecution. He was beaten with clubs so cruelly, that he confessed afterwards he scarcely found himself capable of enduring the pain any longer, and was glad to induce his tormentors by some conversation to allow an interval to his afflictions. For he seems to have been of a weak and delicate constitution, and the softness of his early education rendered him unfit to bear much hardship. His mind, however, appears to have been serene and faithful to his Saviour, whom, in real humility and sincerity, though tarnished with the superstition of the times, he served according to the fundamentals of the Gospel. The Arian bishop of Carthage, who had known Fulgentius, and esteemed his character, highly disapproved of this treatment, which he had received from a presbyter of his own religion and diocese, and told the injured youth, that, if he would make a formal complaint before him, he would avenge his cause. Many advising him to do so, "It is not lawful," says Fulgentius, "for a Christian to seek revenge. The Lord knows how to defend his servants. Should the presbyter through me be punished, I shall lose the reward of my patience with God, and the more so, as it would give an occasion of stumbling to the weak, to see [me sinner as I am, yet of the true Catholic faith and a monk, seeking the judgment of an Arian Bishop."] By and by he retired into the more interior parts of Africa. Some time after he sailed to Syracuse, and then visited Rome, and saw there king Theodoric in the midst of a magnificent assembly. If men in this life, seeking vanity, attain such dignity, what will be the glory of saints who seek true honour in the new Jerusalem?—this was the reflection of Fulgentius. Ruspæ in Africa was the place to which, much against his will, he was at length elected bishop: but this exaltation lessened not the severity of his way of life: and by the Arian persecution he was banished into Sardinia, in company with

Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspæ, banished into Sardinia.

other faithful witnesses of orthodoxy. Upwards of sixty bishops were with him in exile. Thrasamond sent more still into Sardinia, in all 220, exerted himself mightily in overcoming the constancy of the orthodox, and delighted to ensnare them with captious questions. Fulgentius was sent for by him to Carthage, and by his skill in argument, and his readiness in answering questions, excited the king's admiration—till through the advice of his Arian clergy, who looked on the presence of Fulgentius as dangerous at Carthage, he was remanded to Sardinia. Soon after, Hilderic, the successor of Thrasamond, in the year 523, favouring the orthodox, put a total end to the persecution, and Ruspæ once more beheld her bishop.

Hilderic succeeds Thrasamond, A. D. 523.

He lived among his flock from this time to his death, eminent in piety, humility, and charity. For near seventy days he suffered extreme pains in his last sickness—"Lord, give patience here and [pardon] hereafter,"* was his constant prayer—and he died at length, as he had lived, an edifying example of every Christian virtue. I feel almost ashamed to have written so barren a life of a man undoubtedly excellent in godliness. But the reader, as well as myself, must be content with the poverty of materials. In an age of learning and genius the life of Fulgentius would have shone abundantly.† In his treatise to [Monimus] on Predestination, he observes,‡ "The internal master, from whom we receive the supply of celestial doctrine, not only opens to inquirers the secrets of his [own] words, but does also himself inspire the grace to make inquiry. For we cannot so much as hunger after the bread which comes down from heaven, unless an appetite be given to persons before fastidious, by him who deigns also to give himself to satisfy the hungry. From him it is, that thirsting we run to the fountain, who affords to us himself, that we may drink." He afterwards expresses himself with great energy "on the internal doctrine of divine inspiration, where truth speaks the sweeter, as it is the more secret." I shall not expect any man, but one who is truly taught of God, to give a candid interpretation of this.

Fulgentius dies, A. D. 529.

* [Da mihi modo hic patientiam, postea indulgentiam.]

† [Isidor. Hispal. de Script. Eccles. c. 14.]

‡ Book i. c. 1.

"I pray to be taught many more things which I do not know, by him, from whom I have received the little which I do know. I beg by his preventing and following grace to be instructed," * &c. In what follows he shows how seriously he had made the sentiments of Augustine his own, in discussing points exceedingly intricate, with that author's modesty and dexterity, particularly in resolving all sin into pride.†

In a subject so arduous as Predestination, it is very easy to push men into difficulties. Our author observes ‡ that some Frenchmen had objected to Augustine, that he had described men as predestinated not only to judgment but also to sin: from which charges the learned and holy Prosper defended the sentiments of the African prelate, whose death prevented any answer from himself. Prosper says, the unbelief of men is not generated from predestination; for God is the author of good, not of evil. Infidelity is not to be referred to the divine constitution, but only to the divine prescience.

With equal dexterity he defends the faith of the Trinity, in a book addressed to king Thrasamond. Let it suffice to mention one argument for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, toward the close.§ "If he can quicken who is not God; if he can sanctify who is not God; if he can dwell in believers who is not God; if he can give grace who is not God, then the Holy Ghost may be denied to be God. If any creature can do those things, which are spoken of the Holy Ghost, then let the Holy Ghost be called a creature." In a treatise on the incarnation and grace of Jesus Christ ‖ he answers the trite objection against divine election drawn from the words, "God would have all men to be saved," by showing that upon the views of those who see no mystery in the subject, but resolve the distinction into the merits or demerits of men, Almighty God ceases to be incomprehensible, as the Scripture describes him to be. He allows the great truth, that God would have all men to be saved, and yet there is a depth, not to be fathomed by man, in the destruction of so many sinners. Much more might be quoted from this author, on subjects essentially con-

* Ch. iv. † Ch. xvii. ‡ Ch. xxx.
§ Lib. 3. c. 35.] ‖ Ch. vii.

nected with the Gospel of Christ. But the diffusiveness of the quotations from Augustine may supersede the necessity of enlarging on the views of one, who so closely followed his steps, and who wrote and lived with a similar spirit.

Besides several doctrinal treatises, we have also a few epistles of this saint. The fourth to Proba, concerning prayer, deserves to be carefully studied. It is an excellent sample of the humble piety of the African school. He instructs the lady in his favourite doctrine of grace connected with humility, and justly infers, that if a man as yet innocent could not remain so by his natural power, much less can this be expected from him now that he is in a state of so great depravity. He describes, in a pathetic manner, the snares arising from the craft of Satan, and the corrupt workings of the heart; declaring that though the Lord from time to time attends with aids during the sharp war, lest his people faint, yet our mortal nature is suffered to be overloaded with the burden of corruption, that we may feel our helplessness, and have speedy recourse to divine grace. He describes the conflict between flesh and spirit; shows that it must last through life; that prayer and watching are ever necessary, and that a conceit of our perfection would lead us into deadly pride. He recommends a humble, contrite frame of spirit, not only for the beginning, but for the whole course of a Christian's progress, and concludes with a beautiful view of the perfect rest from sin which remains for him hereafter. It is refreshing to the mind, to see the real principles of Christianity appearing in great vigour and clearness in this little composition. His Epistles.

The epistle to Eugyptius * on Charity, while it describes this greatest of Christian graces in a manner much resembling that of Augustine, demonstrates the benevolent spirit of the writer. In an epistle to Theodorus a senator,† he congratulates him on his victory over the world. He had been, it seems, a Roman consul, and had given up secular pursuits through the love of heavenly things. Fulgentius strongly reminds him to whose grace alone he was indebted for the change, and recommends humility,‡ [c.5.] "a virtue which neither those have who love the world,

* Ep. 5. † Ep. 6.

‡ The practice of Fulgentius agreed with his doctrine. About the end

nor those who profess to have renounced the world by their own strength." By which distribution of the unconverted into two sorts he points out the same division of men, which has ever taken place from the time of Christ. Pharisees and Sadducees were their names among the Jews; in the Gentile world the appellation of Stoic and Epicurean gave the same distinction. In the school of Augustine, lovers of the world formed one denomination, confident boasters in their own strength the other; and in our times the same difference is commonly marked by the terms worldly-minded and self-righteous; while in all ages the genuine religion of real humility stands contradistinguished from both these classes. Fulgentius recommends to Theodorus the constant study of the Scriptures. "If you come to them meek and humble, there you will find preventing grace, [c. 9.] by which when fallen, you may rise; accompanying grace, by which you may run the way of righteousness; and following grace, by which you may reach the heavenly kingdom."

In the epistle to Venantia concerning Repentance,* he steers in the middle course between presumption and despair, invites all men of every age to repent and be converted, under the confident expectation of acceptance with God through Jesus Christ, and mentions our Lord's parable of the different hours in which labourers are brought into the vineyard, as an argument that no time is fixed to debar the returning sinner. Jesus would not have come to save the lost in this last age of the world, if human wickedness was ever too strong for divine mercy and goodness. He observes, that the great defect of Judas in his repentance lay in this, that he had no faith in that blood which he had betrayed. He quotes pertinent scriptures, and, to comprehend in one nervous sentence the whole subject, he says,† "A salutary conversion is two-fold; it is when repentance leaves not him who hopes in the divine favour, nor hope deserts the penitent: and it is evidenced by this, if a man

of the year 524, a bishop in an African council disputed precedency with him. The council decided for Fulgentius, who for that time acquiesced in the authority of the council. But, observing how much the other was afflicted at the determination, in a future council he publicly desired that it might be reversed. His humility was admired, and his request was granted. [Vit. B. Fulgent. c. 29.] * Ep. 7. † Ch. v.

with his whole heart renounce his sin, and with his whole heart place his hope of forgiveness in God. For sometimes the devil takes away hope from the penitent, sometimes repentance from him who hopes. In the first case he overwhelms the man whom he burdens, in the second he throws down him whom he sets at ease."—Hear his testimony to the mystery of the Gospel.* "The only-begotten God so loved human nature, that he not only freed it from the power of the devil, but also placed it at the right hand of the Father in himself above all good angels."

In his epistle † concerning the baptism of a dying negro, who had given previous proofs of sincerity, while he was a catechumen, but in the time of baptism itself was senseless and incapable of professing his faith; he endeavours to obviate the doubts of those who were afraid lest his incompetency should prevent his salvation. There are two points observable in this epistle; one is the custom of the Church in presenting infants to baptism, the other is, that however rapid the progress of superstition had been in the time of Fulgentius, yet the most destructive superstitions, and those which are directly subversive of Christian faith and purity, both in doctrine and practice, were as yet unknown. He assigns as a reason for not baptizing the dead, that sins are irremissible after the separation of the soul from the body. He supports his opinion by the declaration of the Apostle, that we must be judged according to the things done in the body. Nothing can be more conclusive against the pernicious doctrine of purgatory.

I observe further that he uses the word "to justify" in the same sense in which Augustine does: nor does the true idea of the word seem to be recovered by the Christian world till the days of Luther.‡

He speaks of the evils of the Pelagian heresy, and describes the strength and ability given to Augustine against it, and strongly recommends the writings of that father to the Christian world, as containing a more copious instruction of divine grace, than had been known some time before, though the doctrine itself, he contends, had ever been held in the church.§

* [Sermo de Dupl. Nativ. Christi.]
† [Ep. ad Ferrand. Diac.]
‡ De Verit. Præd. b. i. c. 14.
§ Ibid b. ii. c. 18.

CHAP. II.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN OTHER PARTS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, TILL THE DEATH OF JUSTIN, INCLUDING THE LIFE OF CÆSARIUS.

In the beginning of this century, Alaric king of the Visigoths reigned at Toulouse, and was sovereign of a kingdom on the confines of France, and Spain, though afterwards, the Visigoths, by the victorious arms of the Franks, were confined to the latter country. Most of his subjects were of the general Church, and he himself was an Arian; yet he treated them with great humanity, and gave leave to the bishops of his kingdom to meet together at the city of Agde.* Twenty-four bishops assembled, the president of whom was Cæsarius, bishop of Arles. They made a number of canons, relating to discipline, two or three particulars of which may be mentioned. "All clergymen who serve the church faithfully shall receive salaries proportionable to the services." This rule, so simple and general, was the ancient provision for the maintenance of pastors. But, by another canon of this council, clergymen are allowed, provided they have the bishop's leave, to reserve to themselves the revenues of the Church,† saving its rights, but without the power of giving away or alienating any part: and here is the origin of benefices.

[Can. 36.]

"In all Churches the creed shall be explained to the competentes‡ on the same day, a week before Easter. All such laymen as shall not receive the communion three times a year, at the three great festivals,§ shall be looked on as heathens. Oratories may be allowed in the country to those who live at a great distance from the parish churches, for the ease and convenience of their families; but they must appear at their parish churches on certain solemn festivals." This last rule showed at once a regard for parochial order, and for the instruction of the people.‖ The next is

[Can. 13.]

[Can. 18.]

[Can. 21.]

* [Or. Agatha.] † Fleury, b. xxxi. 1. [Labbe tom. 4. p. 1381.]

‡ Who seem to have been those who applied for baptism. [See Bingham's Antiq. b. x. c. 2.] § Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.

‖ The union of these two in just proportion gives a perfect idea of good discipline. It would be well if similar care were taken for many places in our own country, far distant from parish churches.

equally laudable : " Laymen are ordered to remain in the Church till the blessing is pronounced." Cæsarius * was very zealous against the abuses meant [Can. 47.] to be rectified by this canon. He observed one day some persons going out of the Church to avoid hearing the sermon : " What are you about, my children ? " cried he with a loud voice, " Where are you going ? Stay, stay, for the good of your souls, [and listen with attention to the word of exhortation.] At the day of judgment it will [not be in your power to do so."] This just and charitable zeal prevailed at length : but he was often obliged to cause the Church doors to be shut, after the Gospel was read, to prevent the indecent practice. His people were however reclaimed, and they repented by degrees. There are still extant two of his sermons on this subject. Mankind in all ages are apt to be weary of God's word ; there were however pastors in the western Church, who served for charity, and not for lucre. Another canon deserves to be mentioned. It forbad auguries, and divinations, and the [Can. 42.] opening of the Scriptures with a view to make an omen of the first words that offered. We have seen that Augustine † had opposed this last mentioned superstition. Here it was forbidden under penalty of excommunication. Yet it still prevailed. I see the African schools, virtuously but unsuccessfully, struggling against the increasing darkness and superstition.

Cæsarius had spent some part of his youth in the famous monastery of Lerins.‡ Hearing afterwards that he was actually designed to be made bishop of Arles, he hid himself among the tombs. But he was taken out thence, at the age of thirty, was appointed bishop, and continued in that Church above forty years. He delighted in singing, and as he found the laity were apt to talk in the Church while the clergy were singing, he induced the laity to join with them in psalmody ; and, in a sermon § still extant, he exhorts them to sing with their hearts, as well as their voices. In another sermon ‖ he exhorts them to throw off all dis-

* [Vit. S. Cæsarii l. i. n. 14. in Append. Augustin. tom. 16. Serm. 281. p. 1416. ed Ven.] † [Augustin. Ep. 55, and 20. s. 37.]

‡ This little island, which we have had repeated occasion to mention, is now called St. Honorat, is close to the French coast, and lies between Nice and Toulon. [Vit. s. Cæsarii.] § [Serm. 284. in App. August.]

‖ [Serm. 283. in Append. August.]

tracting thoughts, before they prostrate themselves for prayer. "Whoever," says he, "in his prayers, thinks on a public place of resort, or the house he is building, worships that place or that house." He directs them also not to be content with hearing the Scriptures read in the Church, but to read them also at home.*

This holy man gave himself entirely to reading and preaching. He preached on all Sundays and holidays. If he was himself hindered from preaching, he caused his own sermons, or those of Augustine, whom he highly revered, or those of Ambrose, to be read by other ministers. His style was plain, and adapted to common capacities. He entered into practical particulars, searched the consciences of his hearers, and severely reproved idolatrous and superstitious usages.†

He was once, by calumny, ejected from his Church; but Alaric, his sovereign, on the discovery of his innocence, restored him.‡ He was exposed to similar sufferings afterwards; but was again delivered, and amidst the confusions of the times distinguished himself exceedingly by acts of mercy. He died in the year 542, universally lamented.

A. D. 542.

In the mean time the cause of Arianism was gradually declining, partly by the progress of the Franks, and partly by the influence of Sigismund, king of Burgundy, who succeeded his father Gondebaud, having been brought over to orthodoxy by Avitus, bishop of Vienne, a year before.

Sigismund,§ king of the Burgundians, having been induced, by the calumny of his second wife, to put to death his son Sigeric, and finding afterwards his error, repented in great bitterness, and besought God to punish him in this life and not in the next. His prayer seems to have been heard; for, in the year 523, he was attacked by Clodomir, king of the Franks, the successor of Clovis, and was afterwards slain with his wife and children. Clodomir himself was soon after slain in Burgundy, and his three sons were brought up by Clotilda, the widow of Clovis, their grandmother.

Sigismund slain, A.D. 523.

Such was the state of the Church of Christ in France

* [Sermon 281 in Append. August.]

† [Vit. S. Cæsarii lib. i. n. 10. n. 34. n. 31.]

‡ [Vit. S. Cæsarii lib. i. n. 12. n. 15.] § [Greg. Tur. Hist lib. iii. c. 5, and 6.]

during the former part of this century. In Italy, some degree of genuine piety may be presumed to have still existed, though I have no interesting particulars to record. If we turn our eyes to the East, the prospect is far more disagreeable. Factions and feuds, heretical perversions and scandalous enormities fill up the scene. Under the emperor Justin, Christianity began at length to wear a more agreeable aspect in some respects, and peace and good order, in external things at least, were in a measure restored. In the year 522, Zamnaxes, king of the Lazi, a people who inhabited the country anciently called Colchis, being dead, his son Zathes repaired to Constantinople, telling the emperor that he was desirous of receiving the Gospel, and of relinquishing the idolatry of his ancestors. They had been vassals to the king of Persia, and had been obliged to perform sacrifices after the Persian mode. He put himself therefore under the protection of Justin, and desired to receive the crown from his hands. Justin granted his requests, and thus the Lazi became vassals to the Eastern Empire, and embraced Christianity. The Iberians, who bordered on their territories, and were also subjects to the king of Persia, had already received the Gospel. How far any thing of the real spirit of Christ's religion was imbibed by either nation, I know not. I can only say, the limits of the Christian name were extended in the East.*

Zathes comes to Constantinople, A.D. 522.

In Arabia Felix† there were many Christians subject to a king‡ called Dounouas, a Jew, who caused those who were unwilling to become Jews to be cast into pits full of fire. In the year 522 he besieged Negra, a town inhabited by Christians. Having persuaded them to surrender by capitulation, he broke his oath, burnt the pastors, and beheaded the laymen, and carried all the youth into captivity. Here then

Cruelty of Dounouas, A. D. 522.

* Fleury, xxxi. 59. † Id. 60.

‡ Bruce, in his Travels into Abyssinia, toward the latter end of the 1st vol. calls this king Phineas, who, he says, threw Christians into pits of fire, particularly a preacher Hawaryat, signifying the Evangelical, with ninety of his companions. The king of Abyssinia, who fought against the Jew, he calls Caleb. His story, as extracted from Abyssinian and Arabian annals, is the same; and their correspondence, in this instance, with the Greek history, gives some testimony to the authenticity of the materials of Bruce's Abyssinian history.

the real church of Christ may be traced by sufferings voluntarily undergone for his sake. The next year, Elesbaan, king of Abyssinia, a country which, as we have formerly seen, had been Christian since the days of Athanasius, supported by the emperor Justin, invaded the territories of the Arabian Jew, subdued his country and slew him. Thus the Arabian Christians were relieved. Elesbaan himself was very zealous, and gave this proof of his zeal, that he resigned his crown to embrace the monastic life.

CHAP III.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN.

ON the death of Justin, surnamed the Thracian, his nephew Justinian succeeded at Constantinople in the year 527. He was then forty-five years old, and reigned thirty-nine. I scarcely know any prince whose real and ostensible character were so different. If one judge by external things, he may appear one of the wisest, the most pious, and the most prosperous of men. He re-united Africa and Italy to the Roman empire; he is to this day famous for his code of laws; he was temperate and abstemious in private life, and was incessantly employed in religious acts and ceremonies; he honoured monks and persons reputed holy, built sumptuous churches, endowed monasteries, was liberal beyond measure in the support of the externals of religion, was incessant in the encouragement of orthodoxy, at least of that which to him appeared to be so; indefatigable through the course of a long life in public affairs; seems scarcely to have ever unbended himself in any recreations, spent much time in religious speculations, rooted out idolatry from its obscure corners, and brought over a number of barbarous kings and nations to the profession of Christianity. What a character, if his heart had been right! His understanding and capacity indeed have been called in question; but I think unjustly. No weak man could have done half of what he did. He must have been a person of superior talents, and of very vigorous and strong faculties. But so

Justinian becomes emperor. A.D. 527.

far as appears from his conduct, he was, in religion, altogether the slave of superstition, in morality the slave of avarice. For gold he sold his whole empire to those who governed the provinces, to the collectors of tributes, and to those who are wont to frame plots against men under any pretences. He encouraged the vilest characters in their detestable and infamous calumnies, in order to partake of their gains. He did also innumerable pious actions, says Evagrius,* and such as are well pleasing to God, provided the doers perform them with such goods as their own property, and offer their pure actions, as a sacrifice, to God. In this emperor then it may be seen more eminently what a poor thing the body of christian religion is without the spirit. Whatever benefit the church might, in some cases, derive from his administration, particularly in what relates to the extension of its pale, this is to be ascribed to the adorable Providence of God bringing good out of evil. On the other hand the evil he wrought was palpable. Dissensions and schisms, forced conversions attended with cruelties, which alienated men's minds still more from godliness, the growth of superstition and formality, the miserable declension of real internal godliness,—especially through the East, where his influence was most extensive,—and the increase of ignorance and practical wickedness, were the undoubted consequences of Justinian's schemes.

In truth this man attempted too much: he pressed uniformity of doctrine through the world by imperial menaces and arms: he laboured to bring all nations into a nominal attachment to Christianity: he prescribed what bishops and laity should believe, and was himself, in effect, the pope as well as the emperor of the Roman world; yet, wretched being! he seems not to have known any one thing in religion in a right manner. In external things he could not but sometimes be right; in internal religion it was hardly possible he should be so; for he was ignorant of his own heart, while his eyes and ears with insatiable curiosity were intent on all persons and objects. It will not be

* Ch. xxx. b. iv. Evagrius Scholasticus. His ecclesiastical history takes us up, just after we are deserted by Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, the tripartite historians of the same period: and in future I must make some use of him, though in historical merit far inferior to the three former.

pertinent to the design of this history to enter into a detail of the actions of such a prince; but the view of his character, which I think is supported by the concurrent testimony of civil and ecclesiastical historians, may teach persons of eminence, either in power, or learning, or genius, who shall give their minds to religious objects, to be in the first place more concerned for their own genuine conversion, and for personal godliness;* and then to contract and limit their plans within the humble circle that belongs to a fallible, confined, and short-lived creature like man; and steadily to move within that circle in the propagation and support of the Gospel of Christ, and of whatever is virtuous and praiseworthy, without being seduced by romantic and dazzling schemes to attempt what is vastly above their reach; for by this method they may be the victims of their own ambition or avarice, while they think they serve God, and may fill the world with evil, while they vainly suppose they are its benefactors. But these are ideas with which the profane and the careless governor has no right to meddle: Justinian was neither the one nor the other. He was in earnest through life, though void of humility, faith and charity; and for serious spirits, the caution, which his character is calculated to give, will stand an instructive lesson.

In his first year he made laws relating to bishops: a few words of them will deserve to have a place in this history. "The absence of bishops,† says he, is the reason that divine service is so negligently performed; that the affairs of the Churches are not so well taken care of, and that the ecclesiastical revenues are employed in the expenses of their journeys, and of their residence in this city, Constantinople, with the clergy and domestics who accompany them.—Let no bishops quit their churches to come to this city, without an order from us, whatever may happen.—If we find their presence to be necessary here, we will send for them."

* Nothing shows in a stronger light the emptiness of his mind than his boasting after he had finished the magnificent Church of St. Sophia, "I have excelled thee, Solomon!" Yet was this vain emperor made use of by Divine Providence as a shield to support external Christianity at least in the world. In his time Chosroes king of Persia persecuted the Christians in his dominions with extreme cruelty, and publicly declared that he would wage war not only with Justinian, but also with the God of the Christians. The military measures and the religious zeal of Justinian however checked the progress of his ferocity.

† Fleury, b. xxxii. 11.

What motives induced bishops to attend the courts so much, is easy to guess; and we have here a plain description how much the Eastern Church was secularized, and how it gradually ripened into a fitness for desolating judgments.

Justinian says further, "When an episcopal see becomes vacant, the inhabitants of the city shall declare in favour of three persons, whose faith and manners shall be testified by witnesses, that the most worthy may be chosen." He proceeds to lay down rules to restrain the avarice of bishops; rules, which had no existence in purer times, because a purer spirit prevailed.

In the year 529, a council, memorable for its evangelical spirit, was held at Orange in France. Cæsarius was its head. He had, as I observed, tasted the doctrine of Augustine concerning grace, and was therefore zealous for its propagation. We may reasonably suppose the articles of this council to have been framed in opposition to the attempts made in France in favour of Semi-Pelagianism, as well as to give testimony to the grace of the Gospel.—Thirteen bishops were present, and we have a pleasing spectacle of the work of the Divine Spirit flourishing in a considerable degree in France, particularly in the parts about Orange, and in the vicinity of the Rhone. "Adam's sin," says the council,* "did not only hurt the body, but the soul; it descended to his posterity;—the grace of God is not given to men because they call upon him, but that grace is the cause that men do call upon him;—the being cleansed from sin, and the beginning of our faith, is not owing to ourselves, but to grace.—We are not able by our own natural strength to do or think any thing which may conduce to our salvation. We believe that Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the other fathers, had not by nature that faith that St. Paul commendeth in them, but by grace." To clear the Almighty of being the author of sin, they add however, "that some may be predestinated to evil, we not only disbelieve, but detest those who think so."

Council of Orange, A.D. 529.

[Can. 2, 3, 4.]

[Can. 25.]

These words express in substance the sentiments of these holy men. But to enable the reader to judge more precisely for himself what they were, I shall give him two pas-

* See Fleury, b. xxxii. 12. [Labbe tom. iv. p. 1666.]

sages from the fifth and seventh canons, translated at length from the Latin original. "If any one say, that [Can. 5.] the beginning or increase of faith, and the very affection of belief is in us, not by the gift of grace, that is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit correcting our will from infidelity to faith, from impiety to piety, but, by nature, he is an enemy to the doctrine of the Apostles." "If any man affirm, that he can, by the vigour of [Can. 7.] nature, think any thing good which pertains to salvation as he ought, or choose, or consent to the saving, that is to evangelical preaching, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all the sweet relish in consenting to and believing the truth, he is deceived by an heretical spirit."

I have been solicitous to preserve faithfulness to the original in this short abstract. Doubtless the sweet relish they speak of is no other than that ineffable delight in the perception and obedience of the Gospel, which characterizes the godly in all ages, subjects them, though unjustly, to the charge of enthusiasm, and produces real practical Christianity. In every effusion of the Spirit of God it always appears in rich exuberance, and is as distinct from formal or even merely theoretical views of religion, as the substance is from the shadow. I look on it as a remarkable fact, that so plain a testimony to vital religion should be given in the South of France in the sixth century, when the Christian world was every where so overspread with darkness. It seems that in this part of France at least, Semi-Pelagianism had been checked: indeed, as several espousers of it were real good men, it is not to be wondered at, that by further experience and attention they might be led to embrace in system what in their own sensations they must have known to be true, namely, that man, by nature, is lost and helpless in sin, and that grace only can revive him. Cæsarius, of Arles, was in all probability highly instrumental in producing this change of sentiment; for we should recollect, that Hilary, of Arles, had been a Semi-Pelagian. I should rejoice to be able to gratify the spiritual reader with the account of the lives, labours, and works of these thirteen bishops of France, which were probably useful and edifying. But my records say no more; and this is one of the thou-

sand cases in which I have occasion to regret, how little of real Church-history has been written, how much of ecclesiastical perversions and abuses.

In the same year a council was held also at Vaison,* at which were present twelve bishops, of whom Cæsarius was one. They decreed, according to the custom observed in Italy, that all country priests should receive into their houses young men, who might be readers in the Church, that they should educate them with a paternal regard, causing them to learn the Psalms, to read the Scriptures, and to be acquainted with the word of God; and in this way should provide themselves with worthy successors.† For the convenience of the people, the pastors were allowed to preach not only in the cities, but in all the country parishes. [Can. 1.]

About this time the monastic rules of Benedict were established, which afterwards were received through the western Churches. They are full of forms and breathe little of the spirit of godliness.‡ The very best thing that I can find recorded of the superstitious founder, is the zeal with which he opposed idolatry. In that part of Italy, where the Samnites formerly dwelt, the worship of Apollo had been still continued. He eradicated this idolatry, and instructed the peasants in Christianity.

In a council held at Clermont,§ in the year 535, I see canonical methods were still used to prevent the interference of secular power in the appointment of bishops. "To correct the abuse of obtaining bishoprics by the favour of princes, it is decreed, that he who is a candidate for a bishopric shall be ordained by the election of the clergy and citizens, and the consent of the metropolitan, without making use of the protection of PERSONS IN POWER. Otherwise the candidate shall be deprived of the communion of the Church, which he is desirous of governing." Council of Clermont, A. D. 535. [Can. 2.]

* Fleury, b. xxxii. 12. [Labbe tom. iv. p. 1679.]

† This is quite consonant to the ancient method of educating men for the pastoral offices, and supplied the want of ecclesiastical seminaries. While so much attention was paid to education and the word of God, there is reason to believe that the doctrines of the Gospel must have been taught with some success in France.

‡ [This is generally the case, but his seventy two injunctions contained in the fourth chapter may be read with advantage by any one.]

§ Fleury, b. xxxii. 44. [Labbe tom. iv. p. 1803.]

Hilderic, king of the Vandals in Africa, having been deposed by Gilimer,* Justinian, by his renowned general Belisarius, recovered the country from the Barbarians, and reunited it to the empire. This put an end to the dominion of Arianism in that region. The orthodox were reinstated; two hundred and seventeen bishops held a council at Carthage; Arians and Donatists were forbidden to hold assemblies, and the lands which had been taken from the Arians were restored by an edict of Justinian in the year 535. The face of true religion was recovered in this country; its spirit I cannot find. The best symptom was the extension of Christianity among the Moors, by the zealous care of Justinian. How far any cordial change took place among them does not appear.

Justinian restores to the Arians their lands, A. D. 535.

In the year 536, Belisarius, the hero of this age, took Rome from the Goths, though some time elapsed after this event before the Gothic power was annihilated in Italy. But what has this our history to do with his triumphs? His master showed much zeal for religion, though ill directed; and what is worse, not principled with the genuine fear of God. The General scarcely seemed to profess any religion at all; and the most remarkable ecclesiastical transaction in which he was concerned is sufficient to brand his name with eternal infamy. A very brief view of it shall suffice.† Theodora, the empress, gave an order to Vigilius, deacon of the Roman Church, to require Belisarius to secure his election to the bishopric of Rome, and the expulsion of Silverius, at that time bishop. Vigilius was in that case to present Belisarius with two hundred pounds of gold. The venal General executed the order on the infamous conditions, and delivered Silverius into the hands of Vigilius, who sent him into the island of Palmaria, where he died of hunger.‡ It was worth while just to mention this villany, that, if any persons have been seduced into an admiration of the character of Belisarius on account of his military prowess, they may see how

Belisarius takes Rome, A. D. 536.

* [Evagrii Hist. l. iv. c. 16.] † Fleury, b. xxxii. 57.

‡ So Liberatus in his Breviary; but Procopius, a living witness, says, that he was murdered at the instigation of Antonia, the wife of Belisarius, by Eugenia, a woman devoted to her.

much splendor of false virtue may exist in a man who is altogether void of the fear of God.

Justinian, though at first he seemed to take some pains to correct the consequences of this scandalous transaction of his wife, of his General, and of the unprincipled bishop of Rome, at length suffered the whole scheme to stand. Still he persisted to meddle in religious controversies, and issued an edict for the condemnation of Origen's errors.

In the year 542, a council held at Orleans ordered, that if any person desired to have a parish church erected on his estate,* he should first be obliged to endow it, and to find an incumbent. Hence the origin of patronages. Council of Orleans. A. D. 542. [Can. 33.]

In the year 555, died Vigilius, bishop of Rome, after having governed eighteen years in the see which he had so iniquitously obtained. Selfish duplicity marked his character more eminently than that of any Roman bishop before him. But he paid dear for his intrigues and dissimulation. Justinian, who had the ambition of acting as an infallible judge of controversies himself, suffered not Vigilius to be the pope of the Church. On the contrary, a little before his death, he was, though very reluctant, compelled by the emperor to consent to the decrees of a council held at Constantinople ; † which, by the influence of Justinian, condemned the writings called the Three Chapters ; that is, three books, or passages of books, one of which was the work of the pious Theodoret of Cyprus. The controversy itself was idle and frivolous; yet, how many pages of Church-history, so called, does it fill ! But I can find no vestige of piety in the whole transaction. "Therefore eternal silence be its doom." Death of Vigilius, A. D. 555.

Several western bishops,‡ because they refused to condemn the three chapters, were banished by the order of Justinian. What advantage was it to the Church, that Italy and Africa were recovered to nominal orthodoxy, and to the Roman empire, when she was thus oppressed by her pretended protector !

Justinian,§ in his old age, fell into the notion, that the

* Fleury, b. xxxiii. 15. [Tom. 5. Conc. p. 380.]

† This was the fifth general council, or the second of Constantinople, A.D. 553, and 27th year of Justinian.

‡ [Vict. Tun. Chron. ann. 555, &c.] § [Evagrii Hist. l. iv. c. 39.]

body of Jesus Christ was incorruptible. Having once formed the sentiment, he drew up an edict, and, in his usual manner required his subjects to embrace it. Eutychius, bishop of Constantinople, had the honesty to refuse the publication of it.* "This, said he, is not the doctrine of the Apostles. It would follow from thence that the incarnation was only in fancy. How could an incorruptible body have been nourished by the milk of its mother? How was it possible for it, when on the cross, to be pierced by the nails, or the lance? It cannot be called incorruptible in any other sense, than as it was always unpolluted with any sinful defilement, and was not corrupted in the grave."

But the imperial mandate was stronger than the arguments of the bishop, however reasonable. He was roughly treated, was banished from his see, and died in exile: he acted however uprightly, and seems from his integrity to have been a Christian indeed. Anastasius,† bishop of Antioch, resisted also with much firmness: he was a person of exemplary piety, whom Justinian in vain endeavoured to gain over to his sentiments. As he knew the emperor intended to banish him, he wrote a farewell discourse to his people. He took pains to confirm the minds of men in just ideas of the human nature of Christ, and daily recited in the Church that saying of the Apostle: "If any man preach to you any other Gospel than that which ye have received, let him be accursed."‡ The example of a truly holy and upright person supporting a just cause is very prevalent. Most around him were induced to imitate. An opinion directly subversive of the real sufferings of Christ, on which the efficacy of his atonement depends, appeared altogether unchristian. But God had provided better things for us, says Evagrius. While the old imperial pope § was dictating the sentence of banishment against Anastasius and other prelates, he was smitten with the stroke of death. Let not profane persons exult over him; but let those who exercise their thoughts on religion, take care to study the written word with humility, prayer, and pious reverence, warned by the apostacy of a man, who for many years had studied divinity, and fell at last into an error, equally subversive of

* [Vit. S. Eutych. ap. Boll. April. 6.] † [Evagrii Hist. iv. c. 40.]
‡ [Gal. i. 9.] § [Evagrii Hist. iv. c. 41.

the dictates of common sense, and of Christian piety, and diametrically opposite to all Scripture: let us remember, however, that his follies and persecutions were the occasion of exhibiting some excellent characters even in the eastern Church, who showed that they bore not the Christian name without a just title to that best of all appellations.

CHAP. IV.

MISCELLANEOUS AFFAIRS TO THE END OF THE CENTURY.

JUSTIN, the nephew of Justinian, succeeded.* He recalled the bishops whom the late emperor had exiled, Eutychius, of Constantinople, alone excepted. The reason of this exception I cannot learn; but, after the decease of John, his successor, who held the see twelve years, Justin was prevailed on to restore Eutychius, who continued bishop of Constantinople till his death. His integrity and piety should scarcely be doubted after the long course of suffering which he had sustained on account of the faith of Jesus. But, in his old age he embraced a whimsical notion that our bodies after the resurrection become thinner than air.† A notion which it would not have been worth while to have mentioned at all on its own account: but it is a specimen of the low state of Christian knowledge in the East, and of the predominancy of Origenism and Platonism, which had never been extirminated in Asia, since they had gained admission into the Church. For the opinion, though not so fundamentally erroneous as that of Justinian, originated from the same fanciful school: and we may see what a blessing it was to the West to have been instructed in the Christian doctrines of grace through Augustine, whence the purity and simplicity of the faith was preserved in a much superior manner, and fantastic notions could not so easily be received among them.‡

A number of Britons having been expelled from their country by the arms of the Anglo-Saxons, who had entered the island in the year 446, crossed the sea and settled in the adjacent parts of France. Hence the origin of the French province of Bri- Origen of Britany, A.D. 446.

* Evagrius, v. c. 1. † [Bedæ Hist. lib. ii. c. 1.]

‡ Eutychius, however, before he died, retracted his error. [Vit. S. Greg. per Joan. Diac. lib. i. c. 30.]

tanny. With them the faith of the Gospel was preserved, as well as with their brethren in Wales and Cornwall, and some parts of Scotland and Ireland, while the major part of England was covered with Saxon idolatry. Sampson, originally a Welchman, left his own country and came into Britanny. This man founded a monastery at Dol, and was bishop of Dol himself some years. He died about the year 565, and was renowned for piety and learning in his day. He had been educated in his native country by Heltut, who was said to have been the disciple of Germanus, of Auxerre. Thus the seed sown in our island by that holy person brought forth fruit; and it is only to be regretted that the accounts of these things are so slight and scanty. About the same time died St. Malo, who, to prevent his being appointed bishop of Winchester, forsook our island, and fled to the coast of France. To the west of Britanny there was an island called Aletha, now called St. Malo's, the greatest part of the inhabitants of which were Pagans. At the desire of the few Christians who were there, Malo laboured among them till most of the inhabitants received the Gospel, and persuaded him to reside among them as their bishop, which he did till his death.* Other British bishops are celebrated, who in the same age were distinguished for their piety and useful labours in Britanny.

Death of the Bishop of Dol, A.D. 565.

Gildas,† surnamed the Wise, another disciple of Heltut, was born at Dumbarton, in Scotland; he preached with much success, in the best sense, so far as appears, in his native country and in Ireland. He afterwards came over into Britanny, and built the monastery of Buis, which is still called by his name, says my author. Two of his discourses on the ruin of Great Britain are still extant, in which he deplores the vices and calamities of the times, and ascribing the desolations made by the Saxons to the depravity of his countrymen, he with honest vehemence exhorts six British princes to repentance. He addresses with much spirit the clergy of Great Britain, and rebukes them for their ignorance, avarice, and simony.

From these hints, in conjunction with what has been elsewhere related, these things are evident; namely, that

* Fleury, b. xxxiv. 14.

† [Fleury, b. xxxiv. c. 15.]

there had been a considerable degree of pure religion among our Ancestors before the invasion of the Saxons; that even after the declension and decay, there were still faithful pastors, who carried back into France that spirit of godliness which the latter country, by the means of Germanus of Auxerre, had brought over into our island; and that the poison of Pelagianism must have had a considerable influence in the production of that national decay of piety which Gildas so feelingly deplores.

Colomban, an Irish priest in this century, came over into the northern parts of Scotland, and laboured with much success among the Picts.* The southern parts of Scotland had been evangelized long before by the instructions of Ninias, a British bishop, who had himself been instructed at Rome. Colomban lived thirty-four † years after his passage into Britain. His disciples were remarkable for the holiness and abstemiousness of their lives. Thus, while the Gospel was rapidly withdrawing from the East, where it first arose, God left not himself without witness in the most distant parts of the West.

Radegunda,‡ daughter of Bertharius, king of Thuringia, having been taken captive by the Franks in her infancy, fell to the lot of king Clotaire, who married her. This woman might have been added to the list of those pious persons of her sex, who were made highly instrumental in instructing mankind, had she not imbibed monastic ideas, the pest which infected godly persons, in general, in these times, and which, though it could not ruin their relation to God, cut off the greatest part of their usefulness. She obtained a separation from her husband, and followed the monastic rules with great austerity to her death. These rules were now grown stricter than ever; the vows were made perpetual, and this godly queen, who might have caused her light to shine in a blessed manner in the world, was shut up during the remainder of her life in a nunnery.

Toward the latter end of this century, the Lombards

* Probably they were originally Britons who fled into Scotland from the arms of the Saxons, and were called Picts, because they painted their bodies, according to the custom of our barbarous ancestors. [Bede Hist. 3. c. 4.]

† Bede says thirty-two, his words being post annos circiter triginta et duos ex quo ipse Britanniam prædicaturus adiit.]

‡ [Greg. Tur. hist. l. iii. c. 7.]

came from Pannonia into Italy, and settled there under Alboinus, their first king. They fixed their metropolis at Pavia. As they were Arians by profession, heresy again took root in Italy, whose inhabitants felt all the horrors and miseries which a savage and victorious nation could inflict. But the Church needed the scourge; the Roman See had been dreadfully corrupt under Vigilius, and formal superstition was corroding the vitals of genuine godliness.

At the same time John Climachus * flourished, who was abbot of the monastery of Mount Sinai, in Arabia, near to which was a little monastery, called the Prison, in which all who had committed any great crime, since they entered on the monastic state, voluntarily confined themselves. The account which Climachus gives of it is striking. The poor prisoners spent their time in prayer, with every possible external mark of self-denial and wretchedness.† They did not allow themselves any one comfort of human life. In their prayers they did not dare to ask to be delivered entirely from punishment; they only begged not to be punished with the utmost rigour. The voluntary torments they endured were amazing, and this voluntary humility of theirs continued [in many instances] till death. But I turn from the disagreeable scene to make one remark:

How precious is the light of the Gospel! how gladly, we may suppose, would many of these miserable persons have received the doctrine of free forgiveness by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, if it had been faithfully preached among them! How does their seriousness rebuke the levity of presumptuous sinners among ourselves, who trifle with the light! how deeply fallen was the East from the real

* [Auct. Miræi c. 153. et J. Trithem. de Script. Eccl. c. 54.]

† [Mr. Maitland accuses Milner [see letter to King, p. 50.] of copying Fleury incorrectly, and also of misrepresenting what John Climachus says respecting this Monastery, and as his words are ἀπροιτους κατεκλεισεν ἕως ὃυ ο κύριος αὐτον περὶ ἑκάστου επληροφορει" I have added the qualifying words within brackets; but it is clear from the whole account that many did die there, one of the requests which they are said to make of their superior being that they may have no rites of sepulture: but, may be buried like dogs; and as to Milner's giving too gloomy an account of the generality of these prisoners, I believe few people who read the whole account as given by John Climachus will think that possible; these Arabian Monks seem to have been as ignorant of the Gospel method of salvation as the very Heathen, and hence like them to have sought the forgiveness of their sins, by every possible method of self-inflicted torture.]

genius of Christianity, when men distressed for sin could find no hope but in their own formalities and rigid austerities!

In the year 584, Levigildus, king of the Visigoths in Spain,* having married his eldest son Hermenigildus, to Ingonda, daughter of the French king, began to find effects from the marriage which he little expected. Ingonda, though persecuted by her mother-in-law, the wife of the Spanish monarch, persevered in orthodoxy, and, by the assistance of Leander, bishop of Seville, under the influence of divine grace, brought over her husband to the faith. The father, enraged, commenced a grievous persecution against the orthodox in his dominions. Hermenigildus was led into the grievous error of rebelling against his father, not through ambition, it seems, but through fear of his father, who appeared to be bent on his destruction. Being obliged to fly into a church, he was induced by his father's promises to surrender himself. Levigildus at first treated him with kindness, but afterwards banished him to Valentia. His wife Ingonda flying to the Grecian emperor, died by the way. Sometime after, the young prince, loaded with irons, had leisure to learn the vanity of earthly greatness, and exhibited every mark of piety and humility.† His father sent to him an Arian bishop, offering him his favour, if he would receive the communion at his hands. Herminigildus continued firm in the faith, and the king enraged, sent officers, who dispatched him. The father lived however to repent of his cruelty; and the young prince, notwithstanding the unjustifiable step into which his passions had betrayed him, had lived long enough to give a shining example of Christian piety. Levigildus, before he died, desired Leander, bishop of Seville, whom he had much persecuted, to educate his second son Recaredus in the same principles in which he had instructed his eldest. Recaredus ‡ succeeded his father in the government, and embraced orthodoxy with much zeal, the consequence was the establishment of orthodoxy in Spain, and the destruction of Arianism, which had now no legal settlement in the world, except with the Lombards in Italy. Though this account be general and external, it

Remarkable Story of Levigildus, A.D. 584.

* [Greg. Tur. Hist. l. v. c. 39.] † [Dial. S. Greg. lib. iii. c. 31.]
‡ Gregory of Tours, b. viii. c. [46. b. ix. c. 15.]

seemed proper to give it, as an illustrious instance of the work of Divine Providence, effecting by the means of a pious princess a very salutary revolution in religion.

I have collected in this chapter the few events which appeared worthy of notice from the death of Justinian to the end of this century, with a studied exclusion of the concerns of Gregory the first, bishop of Rome. He is a character deserving to be exhibited distinctly. And in connexion with his affairs, whatever else has been omitted, which falls within our plan, may be introduced in the next chapter.

CHAP. V.

GREGORY THE FIRST, BISHOP OF ROME. HIS PASTORAL LABOURS.

He was a Roman by birth, and of a noble family. But being religiously disposed, he assumed the monastic habit, and was eminently distinguished by the progress he made in piety.* It was not till after he was drawn back, in a degree, to a secular life by his employments in the Church, that he became thoroughly sensible what advantage he had enjoyed for his own soul from religious retirement. With tears he owned that he had had the world under his feet while he was absorbed in heavenly contemplation; but was now bereft of comfort. "Now," says he,† "my mind, by reason of pastoral cares, is oppressed with the business of secular persons, and after so fair an appearance of rest, is defiled with the dust of earthly action. And suffering itself to be distracted by outward things in condescension to many, even while it desires inward things, it returns to them, without doubt, more faintly. I weigh, therefore, what I endure: I weigh what I have lost, and while I look at that which I have lost, my present burdens are more heavy."

In truth, in different periods of his life he moved in opposite extremes. He was one while dormant in the quiet-

* Bede Eccles. Hist. b. ii. c. 1.——It should be observed here, that before this he had studied the Roman jurisprudence, was eminent in that and every other fashionable secular kind of knowledge, had been distinguished as a senator, and promoted by Justin II. to the government of the city of Rome, an arduous and important office, which he had discharged with singular prudence, fidelity, and justice.

† [Præf. in Lib. Dial.]

ism of solitude; another while, involved in the multiplicity of episcopal cares at Rome. If his lot had been cast in the earlier and purer days of Christianity, he would neither have been a monk, nor a bishop charged with such extensive secular concerns, and so would have avoided the evils of which he complains. The great Sees in these times, that of Rome in particular, through the increasing growth of spiritual domination, and the load of worldly business very improperly connected with it, worldly, though in some sense ecclesiastical, were indeed agreeable enough to minds like that of Vigilius, earthly and ambitious, but were fatiguing beyond measure to men like Gregory, who unfeignedly loved heavenly things. Nothing could be more unwise than the custom which prevailed of encouraging monasticism and very large episcopal governments at the same time. The transition from the one to the other, as in Gregory's case (and it was a common one,) must to holy minds, like his, have been a trial of no small magnitude. The serious complaints, however, which Gregory made of this trial during the whole scene of his bishopric, proceeded from the spirituality of his affections; and all, who have enjoyed in private the sweets of communion with God, and have found how difficult it is, in the hurry of business, to preserve a degree of the same spirit, will sympathize with him. A mediocrity, and a mixture of employment and retirement is, doubtless, the best situation for religious improvement.

Being drawn from his monastery, and ordained to the ministry, he was sent from Rome to Constantinople, to transact ecclesiastical affairs. Here he became acquainted with Leander, afterwards bishop of Seville, the same person that we have spoken of in the relation of the affairs of Spain. Leander and he found in each other a similarity of taste and spirit; Gregory opened his heart to him: "I found my soul," says he, "convinced of the necessity of securing salvation; but I delayed too long, entangled with the world. At length I threw myself into a monastery; now I thought I had placed an insuperable bar between myself and the world. But again I am tossed on the tempestuous ocean, and unless I may enjoy the communion of my brethren, I can find no solace to my soul."*

* [Ep. S. Greg. ad Leand. in Exposit. Lib. Job.]

He had, however, taken with him some of the brethren of his monastery, and with them had enjoyed the benefit of Christian discourse, and of searching the Scriptures. Here, also, through their exhortation, he began his long commentary on the book of Job, which he finished in his episcopacy.* His residence at Constantinople was not without, at least, some use to the church. By his arguments and influence he quashed the fanciful notion of the archbishop Eutychius, already mentioned, concerning the qualities of the human body after the resurrection. Had it not been for the timely and vigorous opposition of a man so respectable as Gregory was for knowledge and piety, the notion might have continued, with many, to the disgrace of Christianity at this day. The emperor Tiberius, who had succeeded Justin, supported the labours of Gregory with his authority.

Gregory, even from his youth, was afflicted with frequent complaints in his stomach and bowels; and by his own account in his letters, he appears to have suffered much in his body all his days. The vigour of his mind however was not depressed, and perhaps few men ever profited more than he did by such chastisements. His labours, both as a pastor and an author, were continued, and, in all probability, received peculiar unction from his afflictions.

After his return to Rome,† there was so great an inundation of the Tiber, that it flowed upon the walls of the city, and threw down many monuments and ancient structures.‡ The granaries of the church were overflowed, by which a prodigious quantity of wheat was lost. Presently after, an infectious distemper invaded the city. Pelagius the bishop fell a victim to it among the first. The destruction prevailed, and many houses were left without an inhabitant. In this distress, the people were anxious to choose a bishop in the room of the deceased Pelagius, and by unanimous consent the election fell upon Gregory. He, with that humility which formed invariably a striking feature of his character, earnestly refused, and loudly proclaimed his own unworthiness. He did more; he wrote to

* Bede [l. ii. c. 1.] † Vita Gregor. [per Joan. Diac. l. i. c. 34, 37, 39, 40.]

‡ These inundations of the Tiber were not uncommon. The classical reader will recollect in Horace, Ode ii. Lib. i.

Ire dejectum monumenta regis, &c.

Mauritius, the successor of Tiberius, beseeching him to withhold his assent.* Germanus, the governor of [Rome] intercepting the messenger, and opening the letter of Gregory, informed Mauritius of the election. The emperor confirmed it with pleasure. In the mean time the plague continued to make dreadful havoc; and Gregory, however backward to receive the office of a bishop, forgot not the duties of a pastor. A part of his sermon on this occasion may give us some idea of the best preaching of those times; for I know none in those days which is superior, and but little which is equal, to that of Gregory.

† "Beloved brethren, we ought to have feared the scourge of God before it came; at least, after having felt it, let us tremble. Let grief open to us the passages of conversion: and let the punishment, which we feel, dissolve the hardness of our hearts. For, to use the prophet's language, 'the sword hath come even into the soul.' Behold all the people are smitten with the sword of divine indignation, and [individuals are] carried off by the rapid devastation. Languor does not precede death, but death itself with hasty strides, as you see, outstrips the tardy course of languor. Every person, who is smitten, is carried off, before he has opportunity to bewail his sins. Conceive in what state that man will appear before his Judge, who is hurried off in the midst of his sins. Let each of us repent while we have time to weep, before the sword devour us. Let us call our ways to remembrance. Let us come before his face with confession, and lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord. Truly he gives to our trembling hearts a confidence, who proclaims by the prophet, 'I would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live.' Let none despair on account of the greatness of his crimes. Think how the inveterate evils of the Ninevites were wiped off by three days repentance; ‡ and that the converted robber in the

* The assent of the emperor to the election of a bishop of Rome appears plainly to have been necessary by the custom of these times. But the total exclusion of the people from all concern in these appointments had not yet obtained. It is obvious to be noticed also, how dependent the bishop of Rome was on the emperor. Antichrist had not yet formally begun his reign, nor would have been known at Rome to this day, had all the Bishops resembled Gregory. † [S. Gregorii Regist. Ep. lib. xi. Indict 6. Ep. 2.]

‡ I translate faithfully: the expression marks the want of evangelical

very article of death obtained the rewards of life. Let us change our hearts, and encourage ourselves beforehand with the thought that we have obtained what we ask. Importunity, so disagreeable to man, is well pleasing to the Judge of truth; because the good and merciful Lord loves to be overcome by prayers. Remember the Psalmist: 'Call upon me in the time of trouble; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.' He admonishes us to call upon his name, and witnesses by this his readiness to forgive."

Gregory concluded his discourse with appointing a litany * to be performed by seven companies, who were to march at break of day from different churches, and to meet at one place.† The first company consisted of the clergy; the second, of abbots with their monks; the third, of abbesses with their nuns; the fourth, of children; the fifth, of laymen; the sixth, of widows; the seventh, of married women. Fourscore persons ‡ in one hour, while the people were supplicating in the litany, died of the plague. Gregory, however, persisted in praying and preaching till the plague ceased.

§ He was all this time as eager to avoid the honour of the episcopal office, as he was to discharge the duty of it. The gates were watched, and his flight was prevented for a time. But he found means to be conveyed in a wicker-basket out of the city, and concealed himself three days. The zealous search of the people discovered him at length, and he was obliged to enter upon his bishopric. This happened in the year 590.

Gregory the Great made bishop of Rome against his inclination, A.D. 590.

Gregory continued to discharge the office in the same spirit, in which he began it. Other bishops had been sedulous to adorn churches with gold or silver; he gave himself wholly, so far as he could, to the care of souls, ‖ The melancholy circumstances of his accession corresponded with the gloomy state of the Church,—in the East, almost universally fallen,—in

Christian spirit of Gregory.

accuracy in Gregory, though not surely the want of evangelical humility. It is not to be imagined that he considered repentance as a proper atonement for sin.

* The word signifies Supplication.

† [Vit. S. Greg. per Paul. Diac. p. 9.]

‡ [Vit. S. Greg. per Joan. Diac. lib. i. c. 43.]

§ [Vit. S. Greg. per Paul. Diac. p. 4.]

‖ Bede, [lib. ii. c. 1.]

the West, tarnished with much superstition, and defiled by variety of wickedness. The whole period of his episcopacy, which was thirteen years and a half,* was disastrous beyond measure, because of the ferocious Lombards; and Gregory himself was firmly persuaded that the end of the world was near. Hence he had evidently a strong contempt of sublunary things, and loved to refresh his mind with prospects beyond the grave. Nor has the sceptical, philosophical taste, as it is called, of this day, any reason to plume itself on comparison with that of Gregory. What is there, for instance, in the scene we have been just reviewing, which should excite the contempt of the philosopher, or rather, of the infidel who calls himself philosopher? Some superstition has appeared in it: it was an age of superstition: the form of Christianity was degenerated even in the best; but the divine religion sparkled through the gloom in the real life of humility, faith and repentance. The spiritual benefit of many, it is highly probable, resulted from the pastoral labours and litanies of Gregory; and whether is more rational, to fear the wrath of God, when his hand is upon us, to weep and pray, and implore his grace and mercy, in reliance on the promises of his word, beholding the scourge as really sent from God; or to harden the heart in jocose and fastidious sneers at the weakness of superstition, and to see and learn nothing from the desolating judgments of the Almighty, that may lead us to repentance.

In Gregory's works we have a collection of epistles, which will give us a view of his labours and transactions. Discipline, and indefatigable attention to order, justice, mercy, and piety, mark all his proceedings. The inordinate amplitude of authority and of extensive jurisdiction, to which superstition had already advanced the Roman See, and which afforded such copious fuel to pride and ambition in some of his predecessors and many of his successors, was to him only the cause of anxious care and conscientious solicitude. Italy and Sicily were of themselves too large a theatre of action; but with the government of these he received the prevailing notion of a superintendence of the Roman See over all the churches, derived from St. Peter. His Epistles.

* [Vit. S. Greg. per Joan. Diac. lib. iv. c. 68.]

In him, at least, the idea excited no pleasing sensations of dominion. A fatherly inspection of Christendom without civil power called him to incessant labour; besides that his own diocese was much too great for any one man's capacity. Humility and the fear of God were his ruling dispositions; and it is evident to a careful observer of Gregory, that he exerted authority in full consistency with these. Moreover he found time to expound the Scriptures, to perform the office of a sedulous pastor, and to write much for the instruction of mankind. Deeply must the spirit of that man have been impressed with the prospects and hopes of immortality, who amidst bodily infirmities, and in times of public perplexity, could persevere in such a course of arduous labours. I shall endeavour to enable the reader to form a judgment for himself of the man, by a review of his letters; omitting those which are the least interesting.

He directed the bishops of Sicily to hold an annual visitation at Syracuse or Catana under his subdeacon, and to attend in it to things which related to the public and ecclesiastical welfare, to relieve the necessities of the poor and oppressed, and to admonish and correct those who had fallen into errors. In which council he begs that they would be guarded against malice, envy, and discord, and maintain a godly unity and charity.*

He reminds the Prætor of Sicily, whose duty it was to send corn into Italy from that fruitful granary of the empire, to be just and equitable in his dealings, to remember that life is short, that he must soon appear before the Judge of all, and that he can carry away with him nothing of his gains, and that only the causes and methods of his gains will follow him to judgment. †

To a friend he writes thus on his promotion: "I value not the congratulations of strangers on my advancement. But it is a serious grief to me, that you, who know me thoroughly, should felicitate me on the occasion. Ye have long known my wish; I should have obtained the rest which I sought, could I have been gratified in it." ‡

"If charity," says he, writing to John, bishop of Constantinople, "consist in the love of our neighbour, why do not ye love me as yourselves? With what ardour and

* B. i. Ep. 1. † B. i. Ep. 2. ‡ Ep. 3.

zeal ye would fly from the weight of episcopacy I know, and yet ye took no pains to hinder the imposition of this burden on me. But as the government of an old and crazy vessel is committed to me, weak and unworthy as I am, I beseech you, by the Lord, that you would stretch out the hand of prayer to my relief." *

The employment of deciding causes, which in these times fell to the lot of bishops, must have been tedious and burdensome to a mind of conscientious exactness, like that of Gregory. Hear how feelingly he complains of the load, in a letter to Theoctista, sister to the emperor:

"Under † colour of the bishopric, I find I am brought back to the world, in which I am enslaved to such a quantity of earthly cares, as I never remember to have been infested with in my lay capacity. I have lost the sublime joys of myself; and, sinking inwardly, seem to rise externally. I deplore my expulsion from the face of my Maker. I was endeavouring to live out of the world and the flesh: to drive away all the phantasms of body from the eyes of my mind, and to see supernal joys mentally; and with my inmost soul panting after God, I said, my heart hath said to thee, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' Desiring nothing, and fearing nothing of the world, I seemed to have almost realized that of the prophet: 'I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.' Surely it is so with him, who looks down from his intellectual elevation on all the grandeur and glory of the earth. But suddenly from the height of peace and stability,‡ impelled by the whirlwind of this temptation, I have fallen into fears and terrors; because though I fear not for myself, I fear much for those who are committed to my charge: I am shaken with the fluctuations of causes on all sides, and say, 'I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over me.' After the hurry of causes is over, I desire to return to my heart, but excluded from it by the vain tumults of thoughts, I cannot return." Such is the picture which Gregory draws of his mental situation in the midst of all his envied greatness. Experience and habit might in time lessen his anxieties. Nor was it through want of capacity for business that he suffered thus extremely. No age ever saw a bishop

* Ep. 1. † Ep. 5. ‡ [The original is "a rerum Vertice."]

more vigorous, firm and circumspect. The immensity of ecclesiastical employment, which went through his hands, seems almost incredible. I rejoice to find in him such vivid tokens of that spiritual sensibility and life, which it is the great business of this history to delineate, as it appeared from age to age in the church, and which distinguishes real Christians as much from nominal ones, as from all other men. In the mean time I have to regret, that while the power and experience of godliness decayed, the amplitude of bishoprics was so much augmented, and that so much extraneous matter, which ought to have been committed to other hands, was thrown upon them. The consequence has been that the dignitaries of the church have ever since been thrown into circumstances peculiarly disadvantageous. Those of a secular spirit have toiled with eagerness for worldly and selfish ends, without feeling any injury to the spiritual life, because they had none; those of an heavenly spirit have felt like Gregory under the united pressures of conscientious care and the tumult of thoughts very alien from the Christian life, and tending to extinguish it.

The pious and upright Anastasius of Antioch has been already introduced to the reader's notice. Gregory had contracted an intimacy with him while in the East, and he writes to him thus in answer to his letter: "I received your letter, as a weary man does rest, as a sick man health, as a thirsty person a fountain, as one overcome with heat a shade. I read not mere words; I perceived the heart itself to be discovering your affection towards me in the spirit." He goes on to complain of Anastasius's cruel kindness, in having contributed to his promotion, and describes his burdens in his usual manner. "But when you call me the mouth and lamp of the Lord, and a person capable of profiting many, this is added to the load of my iniquities, that I receive praise instead of punishment for my sins. How I am overloaded, no words can express; you may form some idea from the brevity of my letter, in which I say so little of Him whom I love above all. I have begged of the emperor to allow you to visit me at Rome, that while I enjoy your company, we may relieve the tediousness of our pilgrimage by conversing together of the heavenly country."*

* Ep. 7.

It is not easy for persons, unacquainted with their own heart, to believe all this sense of unworthiness to be genuine in Gregory; men who know themselves will believe that he spake sincerely.

Gregory was solicitous for the conversion of the Lombards from the Arian heresy, and therefore he wrote to the bishops of Italy, to avail themselves of their influence to unite all the young persons of that nation, who had been baptized in the Arian communion, to the general church, to preach to them the doctrine of eternal life, and to secure to themselves a pleasing account of their pastoral labours at the last day.* Under his administration a gradual accession of this people was made to the church, notwithstanding the great power of the Lombard princes, and their obstinate attachment to Arianism. Indeed the shining example of Gregory himself must have made a very powerful impression on the minds of all who had opportunity of knowing him. He was careful to preserve the great revenues of the church, but no man was ever more conscientious to employ them to good purposes. As he loved to imitate his predecessor Gelasius,† he followed the statement of the revenues which he had drawn up, and formed an estimate of them in money; distributions of which he made to the clergy, monasteries, churches, the officers of his house, deaconries, and hospitals. He regulated the sums to be allotted to each at four times of the year, an order which was observed three hundred years after. A great volume‡ was kept in the palace of the Lateran, containing the names of the poor who were the objects of his liberality, their age and circumstances, at Rome, in Italy, and even in distant provinces. On every first day of the month, he distributed to the necessities of the poor, according to the season, various articles of provision.§ Every day he distributed alms to the sick and infirm; and before he sat down to eat, he sent portions from his table to some indigent people, who were ashamed to appear. It would be tedious to recount from his letters‖ the instances of his liberality. He pressed his agents to inform him of objects, and loved to exceed the expectations of his petitioners. But while he

* Ep. 17. † Fleury, b. xxxv. c. xvi. [Vit. S. Greg. per Joan. Diac. l. ii. c. 24, &c.] ‡ [Vit. S. Greg. per Joan. Diac. l. ii. c. 30.] § [Ibid c. 26, and 28.]
‖ L. i. Ep. 18, 44, 23, 57, 65, 54. [l. iv. Ep. 30.]

abounded in benefactions, he would receive none himself. "We * ought to refuse," said he, writing to Felix bishop of Messina, "presents which are expensive to the churches. Send to the other clergymen every year what is established by usage. But as I love not presents, I forbid you to send me any for the future. I thank you for the palm-trees † which you sent me, but I have caused them to be sold, and have sent you the price of them." The unhappy wars of Italy having caused great desolations of the Churches, that the remaining inhabitants might not be forsaken, he gave those churches in charge to the neighbouring bishops. If two of them did not contain, singly, a sufficient number of persons to constitute a diocese, he joined them together under one bishop, insisting on equal care being taken of that in which he did not reside, as of that in which he did. He made no difficulty of obliging a bishop to leave a small church, where he was little more than titular pastor, to govern a more important one.‡ Having discovered several abuses committed in the management of the revenues in Sicily, he took care to reform them. "We are informed," says he,§ "that corn is bought of the peasants under the market price; I direct that they be paid always according to the current price, without deducting the corn lost by shipwreck, provided that you take care that they do not transport it out of season. We forbid all base exactions; and, that after my death the farmers may not be charged anew, let a certificate be delivered to them in writing, containing the sum which each is obliged to pay. Take particular care, that false weights be not made use of in receiving the payments, as the deacon Servus Dei discovered, but break them in pieces, and cause new ones to be made. I have been informed that farmers are distressed at the first time of the payment of their rents; for, having not yet sold their fruits, they are obliged to borrow at heavy interest. Supply them therefore out of the stock of the church with what they may have borrowed, and receive their payments by degrees, lest you oblige them to sell their commodities at an under price, to make good their rents. I WILL NOT

* Lib. i. Ep. 64.

† [The original is Palmatianas, and means probably vestments of a peculiar embroidery.]

‡ Lib. ii. Ep. 20.

§ Lib. i. Ep. 42. he writes thus to Peter his Agent in Sicily.

SUFFER [THE TREASURY OF] THE CHURCH TO BE DEFILED BY BASE GAINS," * this seems to have been his general maxim.†

This is a specimen of the uprightness and attention of Gregory to those secular concerns, under which his spirit so much groaned. A pharisee would have found a feast for his pride in so much beneficence. But Gregory was humble, he could not find rest to his soul in such exercises, however laudable; and though his heart and head seemed as well fitted as any man's in any age for such work, and though he went through it with much ability and success, yet it were to be wished that he had been allowed a larger portion of time to pay attention to the more spiritual duties of his station. This short extract however (for the account might have been swelled to a large size,) may deserve some attention from persons, whether ecclesiastical or secular, whose employments are of a similar nature. Let them ask themselves, whether with Gregory's care for the preservation of their rights (and in that he was as firm and strenuous as Christian charity allows,) they are also like him upright, disinterested, and merciful. And as human malignity has been abundantly gratified in large details of the encroachments and oppressions of churchmen, it falls within the plan of these memoirs, to show that all churchmen have not been thus iniquitous; that those who are humble and evangelically pious, are also, above all men, upright, munificent, and liberal.

Peter, bishop of [Terracina in Italy,] had consented to a species of persecution of the Jews in his diocese, by permitting them to be molested in their festivities, and to be more than once driven from the place in which they celebrated them. Let those, who have been led by fashionable historians to annex the idea of persecution to that of the priesthood, take notice, that Gregory bishop of Rome wrote to Peter, to condemn the practice, and to give his decisive opinion, that the Jews should not be in the least molested, that they ought to be won over to the faith by THE SWEETNESS of Gospel-preaching, and by the denunciation of divine judgments against infidelity, and that these were

* [Nos sæculum Ecclesiæ ex lucris turpibus nolumus inquinari.]

† [The above is a condensed account of the first part of this 42nd Letter.]

christian arts and methods, while those of a different nature tended only to harden and disgust the human mind.*

To Leander of Seville † he expresses with tears the pressures of his mind under loads of solicitude, and earnestly entreats his prayers. He congratulates him also on the conversion of king Recaredus of Spain, and while he rejoices at the news of that prince's piety and virtues, he admonishes the bishop to watch over the royal convert, that his life may correspond to so hopeful a beginning. He wrote ‡ sometime after to the same prince, to recommend to him a strong guard over anger, pride, and lust, vices more peculiarly apt to infest princes. Of all the princes of this time, he seems most to have adorned the gospel. He was just, munificent, and liberal. And before he left the world, he publicly confessed his sins, and appeared to have been possessed of true piety, so far as we can judge. He died about the close of this century.

To Virgilius [bishop of Arles] and Theodorus, bishop of Marseilles, he writes on occasion of the persecuting methods made use of against the Jews. He again bears testimony against the compulsory practices; and declares how sorry he is to find, that many of that people had been brought, by violence rather than by preaching, to the baptismal font. "If a Jew is brought thither by necessity, not by the sweetness of the word, returning to his former superstition, he dies in a worse state than that from which he seemed to be regenerated. Preach frequently to them, that they may desire to be changed, through the love of what they hear. Thus your desire of saving souls will be accomplished, and the convert will not return like the dog to his vomit. Preach, that their dark minds may be illuminated, and that under God they may be brought to real regeneration." §

He wrote also to Pascasius, bishop of Naples, complaining of the violence used to the Jews in driving them from their solemnities. He blames this method, and exhorts to the same purpose as before. ‖ It is well known what different methods, since the time of Gregory, have been supported by the Roman Popes. I appropriate the term Pope to

* B. i. Ep. 34. † Ep. 41.
‡ [Lib. vii. Ep. 127.] § B. i. Ep. 45. ‖ B. xi. Ep. 15.

Antichrist, who did not, accurately speaking, exist as yet in the Western church. On the other side, Gregory was zealous to suppress the attempts of Jews to seduce Christians, and prohibited their purchasing of Christians for slaves.*

The Lombards were a constant scourge to Italy in the time of Gregory, and he was aware of their intentions to invade Sicily. Hence he wrote to all the bishops of the island to supplicate the Lord in litanies every fourth and sixth day of the week, and exhorted them not only to draw their flocks to this association of prayer, but also to preach to them the doctrine of repentance. "For if the gracious Lord behold us loving his commands, he is able to defend us from the enemy, and to prepare eternal joys for us." †

Natalis, bishop of Salonæ, had written to Gregory in defence of the entertainments given by the clergy. The bishop of Rome allows his assertions, but under these important restrictions, "that no absent persons be slandered at these meetings, that none be made an object of ridicule, that the empty discourse of secular business be avoided, that the word of God be read in them, that no more meat and drink be used than is needful for the refreshment of the body, and to fit it for the discharge of duty. If this be your practice, I confess you to be masters of temperance." ‡ But it seems that Gregory's animadversions on the feasting of the Salonian clergy had given offence, by that which he adds: "You take it ill to be reprehended by me, who, though I am your superior in church dignity (I do not mean as a man,) am willing to be corrected and reproved by all. I thank, indeed, that man as my friend, through whose advice I am enabled to wipe off the blemishes of my soul before the appearance of the awful Judge." One cannot form any great idea of the piety of this Natalis, who had excused himself from assiduous reading of the Scriptures, partly on account of the pressure of tribulations, partly by a mere cavil, because our Lord had told his disciples, that it should be given them in the same hour what they should speak. Gregory informs him, that the Scriptures were given us, that we, through patience and comfort of them, might have hope. How he answers

* B. ii. Ep. 37. b. iii. Ep. 21. b. vi. Ep. 21.

† B. ix. 45. Hence I apprehend the origin of the use of the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays in public worship. ‡ B. ii. [Ind. 10. Ep. 37.]

the cavil, it is not necessary to say. "But we cannot be like you," Natalis had said. The bishop of Rome was not to be seduced by such evasive flattery. "The encomiums you bestow on me," said he, "seem to be spoken in derision, because I cannot in truth find them realized in my experience." We see in all this, on one side, a zealous pastor labouring to revive a sense and spirit of godliness in his brethren; on the other, a slothful and false-hearted minister, poorly excusing himself by feigned apologies, from doing the Lord's work with vigour and sincerity.

After having given a beautiful description of charity in writing to Dominicus bishop of Carthage,* he shows how deeply his soul was penetrated with the importance of the pastoral office. In their views of this, many of the ancient Fathers, whom we deride for their superstitions, do far excel the generality of pastors in our times. Let him who has entered on this office with merely secular views, read, and, if he can, blush and weep, after he has considered, that no age since the Apostle's days has ever seen one more intently and sincerely laborious than Gregory. "Weighty indeed is the office of a Pastor. He must be an example to the flock, and after this he must learn to keep himself humble. He must ever be intent on the ministry of the word, remembering who hath said, OCCUPY TILL I COME. This we then truly execute, when by life and doctrine we gain the souls of our neighbours, strengthen the weak by setting before them the joys of the heavenly kingdom, and bend the proud by sounding aloud the punishments of hell, when we spare none against truth, and when given up to heavenly friendships, we fear not human enmity. I tremble at my own infirmity. How can I sustain the last judgment, seeing so very little fruit of my labours. Dearest brother, I implore your prayers for me. By the union of charity we have a common interest."

To Boniface, bishop of Rhegium, he gives a handsome reproof for boasting of the good deeds he had done. He owned that he rejoiced to hear of his works of mercy. But he was sorry to find, that he himself had spoken of them to many persons. He warns him to take care that he did not mar the whole by ostentation. "What are we, dust and

* B. ii. [Ind. 10. Ep. 39.]

ashes, that we should covet the praise of men? Him you should seek to please, whose coming we expect, and whose retributions will know no end." *

Evangelus, a deacon of the church of Sypontum, had complained to Gregory, that his daughter had been defloured by Felix, the grandson of the bishop of the same name. The bishop of Rome, not without some animadversion on the bishop's careless education of his grandson, ordered, on supposition of the truth of the fact, that Felix should be obliged to marry the young woman, or, in case of refusal, be scourged and confined in a monastery, excommunicated, and remain in a state of penance, and not be suffered to go abroad till farther orders were received from Gregory.† It seemed proper to mention this ancient precedent of the practice of spiritual courts. Doubtless, they were, in their origin, courts of censure on immoralities not so easily cognizable in courts of common law. The necessities of society, and the depravity of human nature, seem to require the existence of such tribunals. The Roman office of censor was of the same kind. Nor would mankind be disposed to depreciate them, were they naturally as sincere in their regard for the honour of God and for moral decorum, as they are for the preservation of property. The abuses of these courts among ourselves are well known. But why persons of rank and property in our country do not labour to regulate them, or rather, do not endeavour to institute a censorship of morals that shall be practicable and effectual,—why they indiscriminately condemn the whole principle, while they permit lewdness to be practised without any restraint,—are questions not hard to be determined. In the mean time, every lover of equity and decency should prefer a spiritual court, armed with some power for the suppression of vice, before the licentiousness, which, under the name of liberty, threatens among ourselves to destroy all the barriers which our ancestors erected against vice and immorality. Severe as Gregory's conduct may now seem, it was wholesome, no doubt, and society felt the good consequences.

In writing to Priscus,‡ a patrician of the East, he justly

* B. ii. [Ind. 11. Ep. 4.]

† B. ii. [Ind. 11. Ep. 40, and 42.] ‡ [Lib. ii. Ind. 11. Ep. 51.]

describes the mixed state of human affairs, and the duties of Christian faith and humility. The thought is common to moralists in all ages; but Gregory ennobled it with real principles of Christianity.

Gregory corresponded also with Theodolinda, the queen of the Lombards: She was the widow of the king Autharit, a zealous Arian. After his death, she married Aigilulfus, a Lombard, whom the nation received as king. Being orthodox herself, she brought over her husband, and the whole nation, at length, to the same persuasion. Gregory congratulated her on the happy prospect of the progress of Christianity among the Lombards. What degree of real piety was in all this, does not appear: the temporal benefit of Gregory's labours was, however, evident in the establishment of peace for some time between the Lombards and the Roman empire,*

Anastasius, bishop of Antioch, seems ever to have been a special favourite of Gregory. He had been ejected from his See by the injustice of Justin, the successor of Justinian, and had lived in exile a number of years. He was at length, however, restored to his situation,† and Gregory wrote a letter‡ to him on the occasion, full of pious and tender sentiments. In this letter, he endeavours to solace the mind of the prelate with the same scriptural views and promises, with which his own had been refreshed under a variety of afflictions. The hope of glory hereafter to be revealed, it is evident, was the spring of joy to his own soul, and enabled him to bear calamities with patience. In another letter§ to him, he writes, "You ought to keep in mind, as you do, what is written: 'In the last days perilous times shall come.'—[Lo in old age you suffer much, consider whose seat‖ you occupy. Is it not that of him to whom it was said by the voice of truth, 'when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee.'] Yet, in saying this, I recollect that from youth you have laboured under many adversities. —Numbers rejoice at our sorrows, as you write; but we know who hath said, 'Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your

* B. xii. Ep. 7. † [Evagrius l. vi. c. 24.] ‡ B. iv. [Ep. 37.]
§ [Lib. vii. Ep. 3.]
‖ [It would seem from this that Gregory considered all Bishops to occupy the chair of St. Peter.]

sorrow shall be turned into joy.' We feel the performance of the former part, let us expect the latter part also. You say, that some who ought to relieve, add burdens to you; I know there are those who come in sheep's clothing, but who inwardly are ravening wolves.—We are not disturbed on account of their ambition in arrogating all honour to themselves, because we trust in the Almighty, whose law and rule is, that those who covet what belong to others, are sooner on that account deprived of their own. For we know who hath said, 'He that exalteth himself shall be abased,' and, 'a haughty spirit goes before a fall.' In these days as I find, new heretical wars arise, which would reduce to nothing the prophets, the gospels, and all the fathers together. But while Anastasius lives, we trust in the grace of our Protector;—their swords will be broken in pieces, striking against a rock.—The Church, in the mean time, by the subtilty of heretics, is sharpened in her doctrine, and learns the truth more accurately. The heart of God approaches to us, and, by temptations we are brought to feel him more sensibly. What I suffer from the swords of barbarians, and from the perverseness of judges, I spare to relate, that I may not increase the sorrow of him whom I wish to console.—But I weigh those words, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' The power of light then shall have its day afterwards; because the elect are the light of the world, and it is written, 'the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning:' hence, all we suffer in the hour and power of darkness is not to be regretted. You wish, if it were possible, that we might converse without pen and ink, and it is a painful circumstance that we are almost as distant from one another as East and West.—But truly we by grace are made one. Why wish you for the wings of a dove, which you have already? The wings are the love of God and our neighbour. By them the church flies, [by them she soars above all earthly things:] if you had not these wings, you would not have come to me by your epistles with so much affection. As your life is necessary to all good men, may you, after a long time, arrive at the joys of the heavenly country!"

I have only to add concerning Anastasius, that he lived five years after his restoration, and died about the end of

the century. We are much in the dark concerni
trials of this great and good man. Gregory's word
ever will stand as proper to be addressed to the su
children of God in all ages. I conceive the bis
Antioch to have been a luminary * in the East, envi
persecuted extremely, bearing testimony to the t
Christ in the decline of the Eastern Church; and t
life and transactions would be very instructive, if th
been transmitted to posterity.

John, bishop of Constantinople, disturbed in Gr
time the peace of the Church, by assuming to hims
title of universal bishop.† The pride an
gance with which he assumed it, was only ec
by the obstinacy with which he perse
Gregory wrote with much vehemence ‡ a
his haughtiness, and on this occasion, laid
some memorable rules of humility, which se
condemned, not himself, but his successors
Roman See. In what a state must the
have been, to revere as a great saint, both living and
so proud a man as John of Constantinople! But
godliness was nearly expiring, and the Mahometan sc
was at hand.

John, the bishop or patriarch of Constantinople, admonished by Gregory for assuming the title of universal bishop.

Gregory wrote to Dominicus an African bishop, en
ing his prayers, and thanking him for his presents.
this letter it appears that the spirit of true godlines
not yet extinct in Africa.§ There is another letter t
same person, who, it seems, was bishop of Carthage.
full of the spirit of charity and devotion, though th
nothing in it that calls for any very particular attenti

Cyriacus succeeded John of Constantinople, whose
has been mentioned already. At his solemn ordinatic
people shouted, "This is the day which the Lord
made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."¶ Supers
naturally paved the way for the dominion of the Cle
and the bishops of the great Sees were gradually incre
in secular grandeur. The congratulation just ment
was calculated to encourage Cyriacus to emulate th

* [Vid Evagrii Hist. l. iv. c. 40. et Hist. Concil. in S. Anastasio in Lect. tom. 1. p. 430.]

† This bishop goes by the name of John the Faster. He died A.D.

‡ B. iv. Ep. 38. § B. v. Ep. 19. ‖ Ep. 62. ¶ Ps. cxv

bition of his predecessor. Gregory* justly finds fault with it, in a letter to the great men of Constantinople, shows that the acclamation properly belonged to the stone which the Lord had laid for a foundation in his Church, † and observes that it was impious to ascribe those praises to the creature, which belong to the Creator. Yet he is willing to excuse the mistake as proceeding from a charitable intention. Gregory, no doubt, had himself too high views of the dignity of his own See, and its supposed relation to Saint Peter blinded his judgment. The exaltation of Constantinople, through the domineering pretensions of the late bishop, excited his jealousy; and so subtle and intricate are the motions of the heart, that he himself might not at all be aware of the selfishness which probably influenced his conduct. I doubt not, however, from the unaffected humility of his whole life, that he cordially detested sacerdotal ambition. The excessive dignity of the prelatical character would have done little harm to Christendom, had all prelates been like Gregory. But, as this was not to be expected, the state ought to have set bounds to ecclesiastical encroachments before this period.

Gregoria, a lady of the bed-chamber to Augusta the empress, in her anxiety for her soul, and in the height of her admiration of Gregory, by letter requested him to inform her if he could, by revelation, that her sins were forgiven her.‡ Gregory assured her, "that certainty in this matter was not attainable: we must repent and mourn over our sins, and apply for pardon continually." He declares himself unworthy of having such a revelation made to him, and gives her useful and salutary advices, so far as he saw into the system of divine truth. In regard to the doctrine of justification, he seems to have had the same sentiments which Augustine had, and with the same confusion of ideas. How superstition, servility, and darkness prevailed in the Church at this time, is but too evident. Yet Gregory was a luminary, compared with most of his contemporaries.

To a person named Andrew, affecting secular greatness, he writes with much pathos on the vanity of sublunary things, a subject which he touched with more sensibility,

* B. vi. [Ep. 7.] † Ps. cxviii. 22. ‡ B. vi. Ep. [22.]

because he was strongly impressed with the idea of the world being nearly at an end.*

Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, observing that some of his people adored the images which had been placed in churches, in his zeal brake them, and by this conduct gave so much disgust, that many withdrew from his communion. Gregory rebukes him on this account, and wishes him to conciliate the affections of the people, by permitting them to make use of images as pieces of history to instruct their minds in the great facts of Christianity. He advises him to allow them as books for the illiterate people, and at the same time to caution them seriously against paying any adoration to them. I have stated the substance of the sentiments of both these bishops.† It seems not probable, that those who deserted Serenus on this account, had much Christianity to lose. Gregory had not the opportunity of knowing so well as we do the danger of his advice. Thus far is evident, that image-worship had not generally commenced in Gregory's time, and that HE seriously reprobated the practice. From these facts, however, the gradual approximation to idolatry may be traced, and the danger of such a mode of teaching, as that which Gregory recommends, has been so abundantly proved since his time, that no doubt remains but in this instance the bishop of Marseilles judged better than he.

The worship of images.

The correspondence between Gregory and Brunehalt, the queen of Austrasia or Burgundy, a division of the French monarchy, which took place amidst the confusions of that country after the death of Clovis, will deserve to be succinctly stated.‡ She was an ambitious, dissolute woman; yet, in that age of superstition, she endeavoured to impose both on herself and on the world by an appearance of piety. She attempted to extend her power while her young male descendants were on the throne; and permitted, or rather encouraged, their vicious conduct, that she might herself keep the reins of government. Gregory, though he commends her respectful attention to the forms of religion, blames her ecclesiastical proceedings in some matters of great moment. He represents, with much earnestness, the

* B. vi. Ep. [26.]

† B. vii. [Ep. 110.] B. ix. [Ep. 9.] ‡ B. vii. [Ep. 114.] B. ix. Ep. 57, 64.

irregular and even simoniacal ordinations of pastors in France, and observes, with great energy, the deplorable state of the flocks, and the scandal of all godliness, which must ensue from such conduct. Finding that his remonstrances had little effect, he urges her still more strongly on the same subject, and observes the probability of divine vengeance overtaking her family, if she corrected not these enormities. It is remarkable that this wicked woman was afterwards put to a cruel death, and that her descendants were slain or expelled. From some parts of the more early correspondence between them, one would think that Gregory thought highly of her virtues. Time, however, undeceived him, and it must be confessed, that he treated her with the undissembled plainness which becomes a Christian pastor.

The bodily afflictions of Gregory, in connection with the miseries of the times, are forcibly described by him in a letter to Italica, a patrician lady.*

"I can find nothing else to say of myself, than that as a just punishment of my sins, I have been almost eleven months confined to my bed. I am so oppressed with the gout, that life is a heavy punishment. I faint daily through pain, and breathe after death as my remedy.† Among the clergy and people of the city, scarcely a freeman or a slave is exempt from fevers. Africa and the East are also full of misery and desolation. I see the end of all things approaching; be therefore less solicitous on account of your own calamities. Study with alacrity that godliness, which has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

In a letter to Eulogius,‡ bishop of Alexandria, written the year after, he says,§ "I have been near two years confined to my bed, in constant pain. Often have I been

* B. vii. [Ep. 128.]

† In another letter he speaks of a disorder different from the gout; namely, a grievous burning heat, that spread over all his body, and took away his spirits. By such severe exercises was this good man trained for the kingdom of heaven, and he evidently grew in humility, tender sympathy with others in distress, and ardent breathings for the heavenly country. [Lib. ix. Ep. 27.]

‡ This Eulogius, by preaching and writing, strengthened the hands of the godly in the East, and lessened the influence of heretics. He seems, by Gregory's correspondence with him, to have been a wise and pious pastor, such as in Alexandria and the East were rarely to be found. § [Lib. viii. Ep. 36.]

forced to return to my bed, when I scarcely had left it, by the violence of pain. Thus I die daily, and yet live. But I am a grievous criminal, and, as such, deservedly shut up in so painful a prison. I daily cry with the Psalmist, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to thy name." While he lived, he was frequently thus afflicted; but the vigour of his mind was unabated, and his faculties were unclouded.

Another instance of his bodily sufferings shall close this branch of his story. Writing to his friend Venantius,* who was likewise afflicted with the gout, he says, "What ought we to do, but to call our sins to remembrance, and to thank God, that he purifies us by afflicting our flesh? Let us take care, that we pass not from one degree of torment to another, and let us consider the goodness of God, who threatens us with death, that he may imprint in us an edifying fear of his judgments. How many sinners have continued immersed in sin through life without a head-ache, and have suddenly been cast into hell!" I rejoice to find in this great man the marks of that deep humility, which is known only to true converts, and of that wise improvement of affliction, of which theorists may reason, but which saints only feel. He concludes thus benevolently and piously to his friend: "May the Lord infuse into your soul these words by the inspiration of his Spirit, cleanse you from your iniquities, give you here the joy of his consolation, and eternal reward hereafter." †

Gregory having been informed, that Clementina, a woman of quality, had harboured some suspicions against him, wrote to her in a charitable spirit, and with the intention of effacing the disagreeable impressions. He at the same time mildly reproved her for the want of a placable and forgiving temper. He reminds her of the well-known petition in the Lord's prayer, and delivered several weighty sentiments adapted to the subject.‡

On no occasion was Gregory wanting to impress on men's minds the care of the soul. Two persons having requested his assistance in their temporal difficulties, after having said what the case required, he exhorted them not to murmur at the divine dispensations, nor to undertake any thing un-

* [Lib. ix. Ep. 25.] † B. ix. 25. ‡ B. viii. 16.

just under the pretence of necessity; but to fix their hope on the mercy of their Redeemer, who forsaketh not those who trust in him; to occupy their minds with divine things, and to repose on him who gives what we have not, repairs what we have lost, and preserves what he has repaired.*

The subdeacon was an officer of the Church, who superintended, under the bishop of Rome, the distant bishoprics and parishes which belonged to his jurisdiction.† Gregory wrote to Anthemius, the subdeacon of Campania, that he had heard of Paschasius, a bishop, who was so slothful, that he neglected every pastoral duty, admitted of no advice, and gave himself up to the building of a ship. It seems he used to go down to the sea on this very unclerical employment with one or two of his clergymen, and was held in derision by all the country. Gregory directs his subdeacon to reprimand him in the presence of some presbyters, or gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and try by that method to reform him. Should that prove ineffectual, he enjoins him to send Paschasius to Rome, to answer for himself before Gregory.

I know not the result; but it seemed worth while to mention the case, as it illustrates the state of the church-discipline of that day, as well as the vigilant attention of Gregory. That so many should nominally sustain the pastoral character, whose taste and genius, as well as disposition and sentiments, are repugnant to it, and who seem qualified to excel in any thing rather than what is sacerdotal, is matter for lamentation. The profane avarice of parents educating their children for the ministry at all events, is one great cause of it.

CHAP. VI.

GREGORY'S CONDUCT TOWARD THE EMPERORS MAURITIUS AND PHOCAS.

It is impossible for any impartial person, who has attended to the spirit and conduct of Gregory as exhibited in his pastoral memoirs, not to feel a conviction of the eminent piety, integrity, and humility of this bishop. Yet it has

* B. xi. [25.] † B. xi. [31.]

been the fashion to arraign his character with great severity, on account of his conduct in the latter part of his life. He has been accused of great ingratitude towards one excellent and virtuous emperor, and of egregious flattery towards another who was profligate and tyrannical. The evidence already adduced of his disposition and temper should naturally dispose us to receive with much caution such grievous accusations. I shall throw together into this chapter the facts on which our judgment is to be founded.*

A series of events had given Gregory a strong prejudice against the government of Mauritius. Their opposition of sentiment had remarkably alienated their spirits from one another, though they once had the most sincere esteem for each other's character. Gregory had been very acceptable to Mauritius, who had strongly favoured his promotion to the bishopric. Nor is there any reason to doubt of the sincerity of the bishop's professions of a very high regard for the emperor, when he made them. Changes of this sort are common amongst mankind, and the declarations which men make at different times of the characters of the same persons, however contradictory, are not to be always charged to insincerity.

Mauritius made a law, to prohibit men, who had held civil offices under the government, from undertaking the administration of the Church. Of this Gregory approved; but a clause in the same law, which forbade military men to enter into monasteries till the time of their service was expired, or till they were disabled for the profession, met not with the same approbation. Gregory, too fond of monastic institutions, and conceiving them necessary for the souls of some, though not of all, expostulated with the emperor on the impiety of the decree. He does so, however, with all possible decency and respect, and lays open his sentiments with a frankness and modesty, which do honour to his character. Doubtless he was mistaken, and the mistake was common to him with the most pious of those times. He promulged, however, the emperor's decree through Italy, and thus, as he himself says, he was faithful to God, at the same time obedient to his prince.†

* See Bower's History of the Popes, Vol. ii. Gregory.

† [Lib. ii. Ind. 11. Ep. 62.]

In this transaction, in which it does not appear that he succeeded with the emperor, the zeal of Gregory was quickened by the strong presentiments of the near approach of the day of judgment, which filled his mind. This mistaken notion seems to have dwelt with Gregory; nor was it in him a mere speculation. He was practically serious in the expectation. I find him pressing it in another letter to the nobles and landholders of the island of Sardinia, whom he reproved for suffering their labourers to remain in a state of idolatry. He justly observes, that they were bound in conscience to take care of the spiritual instruction, of those who laboured for them in temporal things, and he earnestly exhorts them to promote the charitable work.* The selfishness and insensibility, with which so many, in modern times, can reap lucrative advantages from the labours of mariners, slaves and apprentices, with no more attention to their best interests than if they were of the brute creation, here naturally forces itself on our attention. Other letters of the same kind, demonstrate the zeal of Gregory for the propagation of Christianity among idolators and infidels.

Italy suffered extremely from the Lombards, as has been observed, and we can form no hopeful idea of the real conversion of Aigilulph, the husband of Theodolinda, since he still ravaged the Roman territories, and filled them with misery and desolation. These evils were a constant source of affliction to the tender spirit of Gregory, yet he failed not to improve them IN HIS HOMILIES, TO THE INSTRUCTION OF HIS FLOCK. Willing to put a stop to the effusion of blood, and averse to shedding even that of the Lombards by nourishing intestine feuds among them, as he might have done, he strove to make peace with Aigilulph, and had even succeeded, when the Exarch of Ravenna, the emperor's governor in Italy, perfidiously brake the peace, and provoked the Lombard king to renew his hostilities. The Exarch himself, finding his own profit in the continuance of the war, was for persevering in it at all events, and his heart was hardened against the sufferings of the people, which Gregory deplored. Involved as we find this holy bishop in political concerns far more than it were to be

* B. iii. 23.

wished, it is yet pleasing to see him uniformly supporting the Christian character. For now a severe trial came upon him. Mauritius, induced by representations from the Exarch, reproached him severely with his conduct, and in effect called him a foolish person. Gregory, humble as he was, felt the indignity, of all others the hardest to be borne by men of understanding. Yet he checked his spirit, and brake not the just bounds prescribed to the Christian and to the subject of an emperor. "While you reprove me," says he, "in sparing, you have not spared me. While you politely tax me with simplicity, you doubtless call me a fool. —I own the charge. Had I not been so, I should not have come hither to this episcopal scene, to endure what I suffer amidst the Lombard wars.—Indeed if I saw not the daily increase of the calamities of the Romans, I should gladly be silent with respect to personal contempt. But this is my affliction; the same cause which subjects me to the imputation of folly, brings my countrymen under the yoke of the Lombards. And while I am not believed, the strength of the enemy increases mightily. This I suggest to my good Lord, that he may believe of me what evils he pleases, only let him not give his ears to any sort of persons concerning the public good, but regard facts more than words. I know I am a sinner; I daily offend, and am daily chastised. I trust the chastisement of your displeasure will work for my good at the last day. But let me recount my grievances. First, the peace I had made with Aigilulph, with no loss to the state, is broken. In the next place, soldiers are removed from Rome, some to perish by the enemy, others to defend Perusium, while Rome is exposed to danger. Further, Aigilulph appears with his forces; with these eyes I have seen Romans, like dogs, tied with cords, and dragged to be sold as slaves among the Franks.—As to myself, in the integrity of my conscience I am not dejected with false accusations; I am prepared to endure all, provided my soul's salvation be not endangered. But it grieves me to the heart, that Gregory and Castorius, who did all that men could do, while Rome was besieged, have fallen under your displeasure on my account. That you threaten me with an awful account at the day of judgment, will require a few words in answer. I beseech you

cease from this language. 'Judge nothing before the time,' says that excellent preacher Paul. I only say this in brief, that, unworthy sinner as I am, I rest more on the mercy of Jesus than on your justice. Men are very ignorant of the measures of HIS judgment; perhaps what you commend, he will blame; and what you blame, he will commend. I leave uncertain things; I have recourse to prayers and tears alone, begging that the Lord would rule our pious emperor with his hand, and acquit him at that awful judgment; at the same time that he would teach me so to please men, that I lose not his eternal grace."*

The pride of John bishop of Constantinople.

I have already mentioned the jealous uneasiness of Gregory at the pride of John, bishop of Constantinople. The title of Universal Bishop, had upon his own application been conferred upon him in an Eastern council, and the policy of some former emperors had induced them to compliment the prelates of Constantinople with it; because the honour and influence of the imperial city were augmented by this means. Gregory was the more vexed at this, because the synod of Chalcedon† had offered the same title to the Roman bishops, and they had not accepted it. He in his letters called himself the servant of the servants of God. Such humility might have been thought affected in a person not eminent for this grace. Doubtless it would have been more prudent in him not to have assumed it. But it continues to this day the title of his successors, a standing mark of egregious hypocrisy! That which deceived Gregory in this case was the erroneous notion of the pre-eminence of his own See, as belonging to St. Peter; yet I no way doubt but he sincerely abhorred the pride of the Eastern prelate. Had he himself, however, been more completely humble and less superstitious, he would have suffered the affair to pass with greater indifference. While in one respect we behold this good man acting the patriot and the Christian, relieving the distressed, and ransoming the captives with unbounded liberality, nominally possessing great ecclesiastical wealth, but employing it all to the most beneficent purposes, and sparing no labour or fatigue; in another we see him writing and negotiating with persevering vehe-

* B. iv. [Ind. 13. Ep. 31.] † B. iv. [Ind. 13. Ep. 32.]

mence concerning a title, in which, though his cause was unquestionably just, his eagerness was unnecessarily sanguine. He solicited the emperor Mauritius on the subject, but in vain. And this was an additional cause of the prejudices which they imbibed against each other.

Mauritius cannot be vindicated in supporting the odious pride of John against the just demands of Gregory. The evil, by the countenance of the emperor, continued, and John's successor assumed the same Anti-Christian title. But Gregory had still more weighty causes of complaint, and such as his episcopal duty called on him to lay before the emperor.

This he did in a letter to Constantia, the empress. "Knowing," says he, "that there were many Gentiles* in Sardinia, that they worshipped idols, and that the clergy were remiss in preaching our Redeemer to them, I sent a bishop from Italy thither, who, the hand of the Lord being with him, brought over many of them to the faith. I am informed, that those who persevere in idolatry, give a fee to the judge of the island, that they may be allowed to do so with impunity. Some, having been baptized, and ceasing to worship idols, are still obliged to pay the same fine to the judge: † who, when the bishop blamed him, answered, that he had paid so much money for the purchase of his office, that he could not recover his expences but by such perquisites. The island of Corsica also is oppressed with such exactions and grievances, that the inhabitants are scarcely able to pay the tributes even by the sale of their

* The term means idolaters in the language of the Fathers. B. iv. Ep. 77. [or 33.]

† Gregory was much afflicted to find, that almost all the peasants of the islands were still idolaters. Januarius, bishop of Cagliari, was indolent; the slaves[1] belonging to his own church were idolaters; the other bishops of the province were equally negligent. Hospiton,[2] the chief of the barbarians, had, however, received the Gospel; and to him Gregory recommended his missionaries, exhorting him to exert himself for the salvation of his countrymen. Gregory rebuked Januarius for his neglect of discipline in general, though he had exercised it severely in one instance, in which he had met with a personal affront. The world is still the same; I could wish that what has been mentioned did not give just cause to the reader, to recollect not only the state of religion in the West Indies, but nearer at home, in Ireland, in which, notwithstanding there are such a number of bishoprics and churches, a superstitious and idolatrous religion prevails to this day.

[1] [Lib. iii. Ep. 26.]

[2] [Lib. iii. Ep. 27.]

children. Hence a number of proprietors in the island, relinquishing the Roman government, are reduced to put themselves under the protection of the Lombards. For what more grievous oppression can they suffer from the barbarians than to be obliged to sell their children?—I know that the emperor will say, that the whole produce of the revenue in these islands is applied to the support and defence of Italy. Be it so; but a divine blessing ought not to be expected to attend the gains of sin." He wrote again to the empress,* against the pride of John, and speaks superstitiously on the merits of St. Peter, while he laments his own unworthiness. Twenty-seven years, he observes, the Roman church had suffered from the desolation of the Lombards; and its daily expenses, partly on account of the war, and partly in the support of the indigent, were incredibly great.

Gregory had also other just causes of complaint against the emperor. Property, he saw, was entirely fluctuating and insecure on account of oppressive exactions, insidious proceedings in wills, and various artifices employed by the emperor's ministers.† These evils were constantly practised in Italy, and Gregory had deplored them in vain.

Evagrius delivers a very pompous encomium on the character of Mauritius.‡ But his praise is declamatory and vague, and liable to the suspicion of flattery, as Mauritius was then living. After all due allowances made on account of the emperor's distance from Italy, it is impossible to vindicate his conduct. He wanted not military virtues, and had some sense of religion. But avarice was the predominant feature of his character; and how much this vice prevails to eclipse all laudable qualities in a man, was never more illustrated than in the conduct of Mauritius. The king of the Avares, a Scythian nation on the banks of the Danube, offered, for a ransom, to liberate some thousands of prisoners. He even proposed to do it at a low price; but Mauritius would not part with his money, and the barbarian in a rage massacred all his prisoners. Mauritius, though covetous, was not inhuman: he was struck with horror at the news, and besought God, that his punishment might be in this life, not in the next. His prayer was an-

* [Lib. iv. Ep. 34.] † B. xi. Ep. [38.] ‡ [Lib. v. c. 19.]

swered in the former part of it undoubtedly, and I hope also in the latter. As he had alienated the affections of his soldiers by his refusal to supply their wants, they elevated Phocas, a centurion, to the Imperial throne. Mauritius fled, but was seized, and inhumanly murdered with his wife and family. Five of his sons were slain in his sight before he himself received the fatal stroke. The little spark of divine grace, which for years seems to have maintained a dubious existence in a heart by nature extremely avaricious, was fanned into a flame by the keen blast of wholesome affliction. Mauritius bore the scene with silent resignation, repeating only, as each of his children was butchered, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments!" A nurse, who took care of his youngest son, placed her own in its room: Mauritius detecting the generous fraud, discovered it to the executioners, and prevented its effect.—This is a transaction of civil history, but it falls in with our plan. The great faults of one, who had a latent spark of grace within him, were punished in this life by the wickedness of the monster Phocas, and the story deserves to be remembered as a beacon to warn professors of godliness against the love of the world. Mauritius seems to have profited abundantly by the scourge, and to have died in such a frame of mind as belongs only to a Christian. We are not apt to be aware of the advantages which society receives from Christianity. Let us suppose this emperor to have been totally unacquainted with, or entirely averse to Christian principles. How immensely more pernicious his natural disposition would have been, unchecked internally, as well as externally, can scarcely be conceived.

The images of Phocas and of his wife Leontia, were sent to Rome, and received with much respect by the people, and by Gregory himself. It cannot be supposed, that the bishop of Rome could be acquainted with the personal character of Phocas, who was in truth a man of extraordinary wickedness; and the late transactions at Constantinople would naturally be misrepresented to him in the accounts transmitted thence. Prejudiced as he was against Mauritius, and willing to hope better things from the new emperor, he wrote him a congratulatory letter, in which he studiously avoided saying any thing on the detail of circum-

stances, of which he must have been very insufficiently informed, and dwelt on that which was certain, namely, the adorable hand of Divine Providence in changing the times, and in transferring kingdoms, as he pleases. He exults in the prospect which he had too eagerly formed of a wise, just and pious administration. He modestly hints at the great abuses of the late government, and exhorts Phocas to redress them, reminding him, "that a Roman emperor commands freemen, and not slaves."* Such is the substance of his letter, in which I see nothing unworthy of the piety and patriotism of Gregory, but much of his wonted care for the good of the church and the public.

Gregory wrote again to Phocas, to apologize for the want of a deacon, who should reside at Constantinople. Phocas had complained to him of this, and invited him to send one. The bishop informed him, that the severity of the late government had deterred all clergymen from going thither. But, as he now hoped better things, he sent him a person, whom he recommended to his protection. He beseeches Phocas to listen to his relation of facts, as he would thence learn more distinctly the miseries which Italy had sustained without redress, for thirty-five years, from the Lombards.† Is it at all surprising, that this language should be used by a man who sincerely loved his country, and knew little of the new emperor; who probably had received a false account of his actions and character, and who had so long been, on Christian principles, both patient and loyal to an oppressive government?

In another letter‡ to Leontia he is not to be excused from the charge of an unhappy superstition. He talks of Peter the Apostle, reminds her of the scripture-text, on the perverted use of which hangs the whole structure of the papacy,§ and of his intercession in heaven. He prays, that she and her husband may be endowed with princely virtues, and expresses, I will not say with flattery, but with an expectation much too sanguine, his hopes of the blessings of the new administration.

Phocas was displeased with Cyriacus, the bishop of Constantinople, because he had generously interested himself

* B. xi. Ep. [38.] † B. xi. Ep. [45.] ‡ [Lib. xi. Ep. 46.]
§ Matt. xvi. 8.

in favour of the remaining branches of Mauritius's family; and while he courted the favour of Gregory and of the Romans at a distance, he tyrannized at home in an uncommon manner. But Gregory died the next year after Phocas's promotion, and had not, probably, time enough to know his genuine character, and was himself also so bowed down with pains and infirmities, that he was unable to answer a letter of Theodolinda, queen of the Lombards. He had promised to do it, if his health was restored: but he grew less and less capable of business till he died. Had health and opportunity permitted, the vigour and piety of his character give me no room to doubt, that he would have rebuked the Roman tyrant in such a manner, as to have quite silenced the accusations, which on this account, have been thrown upon him. That he should have opposed the usurpation of Phocas, will not be expected from those who consider the views of the primitive Christians, who intermeddled not with politics; but he, who plainly rebuked Mauritius, would certainly not have spared his successor, whose conduct was far more blameable.*

CHAP. VII.

GREGORY'S CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO ENGLAND.

THIS also has been a source of much accusation against the Roman prelate. Protestant writers, in their zeal against popery, have censured his domineering spirit with acrimony, as if the British Christians had been protestants, and the Roman Christians, papists, accurately speaking. But Gregory was no pope, nor had the Britons separated from the general Church, and formed a purer establishment of their own. Superstition and ecclesiastical power, in the excess, adhered indeed to the conduct of the Roman prelate, as the fault of the age, not of his temper; and if he had perfectly avoided the fashionable evils of his time, he would have been, I had almost said, more than human. But the

* Phocas took away the title of Universal Bishop from the prelate of Constantinople, and granted it to Boniface III. the next successor but one to Gregory. After Phocas's death the prelate of the East re-assumed the title. The two bishops each preserved it, and with equal ambition strove for the pre-eminence.

ideas, peculiarly popish, were not yet matured in the churches. Dissenting writers, I find, have been seduced by the same sort of prejudices as divines of the Church of England, and it is curious to observe, how different writers can find in the features of the British Church, the very figure of their own denomination. I ought to profit by the mistakes of others; that is, to forget my own times and connections; to transplant myself into the age of which I write; to make liberal allowances for its customs and prejudices, and to enable the reader, from facts themselves, to form his own judgment.

For near a century and a half the Gospel of Christ had been declining in Britain, and for the greatest part of that time had been, as we have seen, confined to Wales and Cornwall, or to the mountains of Scotland. Ireland too still preserved something of the light, while the Angles or Saxons, our ancestors, destroyed every evangelical appearance in the heart of the island. No barbarians were ever more ferocious or more idolatrous; and the Britons, who escaped their ravages, oppressed one another with civil broils. Being favoured with some cessation from their wars with the Saxons, they lost by degrees all traces of former piety, though the form of Christianity still remained. One proof among others, which the old historian Gildas gives of their entire want of Christian zeal is, that they took not the least pains for the conversion of the Saxons. Seven Saxon kingdoms, called the Heptarchy, were now formed, altogether ignorant and idolatrous, while the few British churches were inattentive to the propagation of Christian truth in the island. And the Saxons continued, some of them for a century, others more than two centuries, immersed in darkness.*

One cannot, from these circumstances, form any agreeable idea either of the piety or of the knowledge of the British Christians. Nor are the excuses which our protestant historians are inclined to make for their want of zeal, at all satisfactory. It has been said that, "The hostilities of the Angles would cause such attempts to be arduous;" but let the reader only reflect how such difficulties were surmounted by zealous and charitable Chris-

* See Warner's Eccl. Hist. [b. ii. p. 36.] † Bede, [i. c. 22.]

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y plan or scheme of piety or discipline, which
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Missions to England, A.D. 597.

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st add, that two queens were concerned in this work,

* Bede, b. i. [c. 23, and 24.]

tians in former ages.* I cannot but therefore subscribe to the testimony of our ancient historian,† "that much worthier pastors were sent by the divine goodness, through whom, those, whom God had foreknown, might believe to salvation." A testimony as evangelical in its language, as it is solid in fact.

Gregory's Mission to Britain.

It was about 150 years after the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, that Gregory sent his famous mission into our island, toward the close of the sixth century. It was no sudden thought, but the effect of much deliberation. Even before his consecration at Rome, walking one day in the forum, he saw some very handsome youths exposed to sale. Asking of what country they were, he was informed they were of the island of Britain. "Are the inhabitants of that island Christians or Pagans?" They are Pagans, was the reply. Alas! said he, deeply sighing, that the prince of darkness should possess countenances so luminous, and that so fair a front should carry minds destitute of eternal grace. What is the name of the nation? Angli, it was said. In truth they have angelic countenances, and it is a pity they should not be coheirs with angels in heaven. What is the province from which they come? Deira, that is Northumberland, he was told. It is well, said he, De irâ, snatched from the wrath of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. "What is the name of their king?" Ella, was the answer. Playing upon the name, "Alleluia should be sung to God in those regions." ‡ Impressed with the importance of the object, he earnestly entreated the then Roman bishop to send a mission to the island, offering himself as one ready for the task. Nothing but the officious benevolence of the Roman citizens prevented the work at that time. Gregory was too much beloved at Rome to be allowed to leave it.

* [Bede i. c. 22.] † [Bede ii. c. 1.]

‡ I leave to fastidious sceptics, such as the Historian Hume, to sneer at Gregory's want of taste in these several allusions. The candid reader will impute them to the times, not to the man; and the devout and charitable will adore the goodness of God, which was beginning to provide such precious benefits for our country; benefits, which call for ceaseless gratitude to the Author of all good, and should endear the memory of the Roman prelate to our latest posterity. An elegant epigram on Milton, by a countryman of Gregory, turns on the same conceit:

Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, mos, si pietas sic,
Non Anglus, verum herclè, Angelus ipse fores.

It was the character of Gregory to pursue with unwearied attention any plan or scheme of piety or discipline, which he had once conceived. After his consecration, in the year 595, he directed a presbyter, whom he had sent into France, to instruct some young Saxons of seventeen or eighteen years of age, in Christianity. He intended to prepare them for the mission into our island; and in the year 597 he actually sent missionaries hither. They were a number of monks, at the head of whom was one named Augustine. In obedience to Gregory's directions, they proceeded on their journey; but their hearts failed them, when they reflected on the difficulties and dangers to which they thought themselves likely to be exposed. The faith and zeal and simplicity of a Christian missionary were at this time grown rare in the world; and Augustine was sent back by the rest, to entreat Gregory to discharge them from the service. The prelate wrote exhortatory letters, advising them to proceed in confidence of Divine aid. He informed them, that it had been better not to have begun a good work, than to recede from it afterwards. He entreated them not to be deterred by the labour of the journey, nor by the breath of malevolence. He set before them the heavenly prospects, and prayed that he himself might see the fruit of their labours in the eternal country. For though, says he, I cannot labour with you, may I at the same time be found in the joy of retribution, because I am willing to labour! Nor did he neglect any means proper to accommodate the missionaries: he recommended them to the attention of Etherius, bishop of Arles, and secured them all the assistance in France, that might expedite their passage into Britain, and every convenience which they needed. Thus animated, they arrived in Britain.*

Missions to England, A.D. 597.

There was, however, a remarkable concurrence of providential circumstances which facilitated the work, and gave it a more expeditious success than might have been expected from appearances. It is very observable, how much the Lord has made use of women in the propagation of the Gospel among idolaters. To former instances of this sort, we must add, that two queens were concerned in this work,

* Bede, b. i. [c. 23, and 24.]

one of whom was the infamous Brunehaut, whose correspondence with Gregory has been noticed. Desirous to cover her vices by the appearance of religion, she had, at Gregory's request, given the missionaries every possible assistance. The other, a character on whom the mind will dwell with pleasure, was Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, a descendant of Clovis. Ethelbert, to whom she had been married in his father's lifetime, was now king of Kent, and one of the most wise and powerful of the Saxon princes. He had not been allowed to marry the French princess but on the express stipulation, that she should be permitted to make free profession of Christianity, in which she had been educated. She brought over with her a French bishop to the court of Dorobernium, now Canterbury. Her principles were firm and sound; her conduct was worthy of the Christian name; and her influence over her husband was considerable. Her zealous piety was not inferior to that of the queen Clovis, which had been attended with such happy consequences in France; and every thing conspired to favour the missionaries.

Ethelbert assigned Augustine a habitation in the isle of Thanet. Here he remained at first with his associates, who were nearly forty. By the direction of Gregory, they had taken with them French interpreters, by whose means they informed the king, that they were come from Rome,* and brought him the best tidings in the world, eternal life to those who received them, and the endless enjoyment of life with the living and true God. After some days, Ethelbert paid them a visit; but being apprehensive of enchantments, he took care to receive them in the open air, where he thought he should be safer than in a house. The missionaries met him, singing litanies for their own salvation, and that of those for whose sake they came thither.† Sitting down, by the king's direction, they preached to him and his attendants the word of life. I cannot produce the smallest extract of the sermon; but that it explained the fundamentals, at least, of the Gospel, there seems no reason to doubt.

* Bede, b. i. Ep. 25, &c.

† As I write not the history of superstition, but of Christian religion, I think not myself obliged to copy all the accounts I meet with in ancient records which relate to the former. Justice, in the extreme, has been done to them by other writers.

One may form some idea of it by the king's answer, which was to this effect, "They are fine words and promises, which ye bring, but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot afford my assent to them, nor relinquish those religious practices which I myself, together with all the English nation, have for so long a time observed. But as ye are come hither from a great distance, and as I seem to discover that ye are willing to communicate to us those things, which ye believe to be true and most excellent, we are not willing to disturb you, but rather to receive you in a friendly manner, and to afford you what may be necessary for your support; nor do we hinder you from uniting all, whom ye can persuade by preaching, to the faith of your religion." He gave them a mansion in the royal city of Canterbury, with all necessary accommodations, and the licence of preaching the word. As they approached the city, they sang in concert this litany; "We pray thee, O Lord, in all thy mercy, that thine anger and thy fury may be removed from this city, and from thy holy house, because we have sinned. Alleluia."

Certainly the human mind was in a debased and childish state at this time throughout a great part of the world. It had long been sinking in its powers and taste. The heathen philosophers and orators of these times appear no way superior to Christian authors and pastors, in the use and cultivation of the understanding. Such men as Gregory and his missionaries should not be compared with Cicero and Demosthenes, but with their own contemporaries; and had this been done by writers who treat them with perfect contempt, the injustice of that contempt would have appeared. It must be expected, that the work of divine grace in different ages, will, in its effects and manifestations, exhibit the complexion and colour of the objects with which it is surrounded. The subtilty of Satan will not fail to take every possible advantage of this circumstance, and I can believe that even more superstitions than those recorded by Bede, attended the labours of the Roman missionaries. In our own times of refinement, evils far more plausible, but not less pernicious, accompany the same salutary work. I have not, however, observed any thing idolatrous, or otherwise directly subversive of Christianity, to have yet pre-

vailed in any of the fashionable superstitions. These things being premised, let us consider what most probably was the doctrine preached by Augustine; I say probably, since the wretched narratives from which I draw my information have given no account. That eternal salvation and forgiveness of sin by the blood of the Lamb, was his capital doctrine, seems evident in a great measure from Ethelbert's observation of the good news which they brought. I may still more confidently say, that his sermon was not a system of moral duties. For how could that be called good news? All the difficulty with Ethelbert was, to believe what they promised; the very same difficulty which strikes all unrenewed minds at the first hearing of the Gospel. And when to this we add what we certainly know of Gregory's sentiments, and consider Augustine as preaching according to his views, the evidence seems to rise even beyond probability. Ethelbert, a prudent and sensible prince, though, as yet at least, by no means convinced of the truth of Christianity, sees no suspicious mark in the language and conduct of the preachers. The air of genuine sincerity is simple, and above the possibility of imitation. Candid and intelligent minds perceive it almost intuitively. The king of Kent could see no selfish motive that was likely to influence these men. They spake with an earnestness that showed their own conviction of the excellency of their doctrine, and their desire of profiting their fellow-creatures. Not an atom of gain was to be acquired to the See of Rome: the whole mission was disinterested. Hence the candid prince was induced to give them countenance; and the Gospel appears to have been preached by these missionaries with plainness and sincerity.

Their conduct at Canterbury was correspondent to these beginnings. They prayed, fasted, watched, preached the word of life to all, as opportunity served: they lived as men above the world; received nothing from those whom they taught, except necessaries: they practised what they taught, and showed a readiness to suffer, or even to die, for the truth which they preached. Some believed and were baptized, admiring their innocent lives, and tasting the sweetness of their doctrine. Near the city there was an old Church, built in the times of the Romans, in which queen

Bertha was wont to pray. In this the missionaries first held their assemblies, sang, prayed, preached, and baptized, till, the king himself being converted to the faith,* they obtained a larger licence for preaching every where, and of building or repairing churches. When he himself, among others, delighted with the holiness of their lives, and the preciousness of Gospel promises, confirmed by many miracles,† believed and was baptized, numbers crowded to hear, and received the word. The king, congratulating the new converts, declared that he would compel no man to become a Christian; however, he embraced those who did so with a more intimate affection, as fellow-heirs of the grace of life. For the missionaries had taught him, that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not compulsive. He now gave to them a settlement in Canterbury, suited to their station, with all necessary accommodations.

Augustine returning into France, received ordination, as the archbishop of the English nation, from the bishop of Arles, and returning into Britain, sent Laurentius the presbyter, and Peter the monk, to acquaint Gregory with his success, and to receive answers to various questions. To his enquiries concerning the maintenance of the clergy, Gregory answered, that the donations made to the Church were, by the customs of the Roman See, divided into four portions, one for the bishop and his family to support hospitality, a second to the clergy, a third to the poor, a fourth to the reparation of churches: that as the pastors were all monks, they ought to live in common, with a remarkable exception, which proves that the absolute prohibition of marriage, one of the marks of Antichrist,‡ was not yet enjoined the clergy,§ namely, that those of them who preferred the marriage state, might be allowed to marry, and receive their maintenance out of the monastery. To another question, which related to the diversity of customs and liturgies in different

Augustine ordained archbishop of the English nation.

* I hope Bede's expression (b. i. Ep. 26.) is true in the proper sense of the words.

† What shall be said concerning these miracles? The credulity of that age should not lead one to deny all that is said of them. It was a new scene: Evangelists were preaching among pagans. Certain it is, that every one concerned in those scenes believed their reality.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 3.

§ [Gregory's words are :—si qui sunt clerici extra sacros ordines constituti, which would seem to confine this permission to Lay-brother

churches, the answer of Gregory was liberal; namely, that the new bishop was not bound to follow the precedent of Rome, but that he might select whatever parts or rules appeared the most eligible, and best adapted to promote the piety of the infant church of England, and compose them into a system for its use. A number of other questions and answers are recorded likewise, too uninteresting to deserve a place here.* Yet amidst the childish superstition of the times, the enlightened mind of Gregory appears; and his occasional comment on St. Paul's words, concerning the law in his members warring against the law of his mind, in which the bishop understands the Apostle as describing himself to be free and enslaved at the same time, with a double respect to his natural and spiritual state, evinces the solidity of his evangelical knowledge.

Augustine † having intimated, that the harvest was plenteous, but that the labourers were few, Gregory sent him more missionaries, and directed him to constitute a bishop at York, who might have other subordinate bishops; yet, in such a manner, that Augustine of Canterbury should be metropolitan of all England. Such were the rudiments of the English Church. Gregory has been censured for excessive eagerness in settling a plan of ecclesiastical goverment for places as yet not in the least evangelized: and it must be owned, that this extreme care of subordination and uniformity does seem premature; but the spirit of the times favoured such hasty external institutions.

Gregory thought long and deeply of this his favourite infant Church; and wrote to Mellitus, one of the missionaries going to Britain, an account of the fruits of his meditations; which were,‡ that the idol-temples being purged of their uncleanness, should be converted into churches for the use of the natives, in which they might worship God, according to the Gospel. And reflecting that they had been wont to sacrifice to dæmons, and in their sacrifices to indulge themselves in feasts, he directs that, setting apart all sacrifices, and whatever was connected with idolatry, they might be allowed on the day of the Church's dedication, or on the martyrdom of Saints, to make booths for themselves in the neighbourhood of the churches, and enjoy

* Bede, b. i. c. 27. † [Bede, i. c. 29.] ‡ Bede, b. i. c. 30.

themselves in temperate banquets. This latter direction appears dangerous; the reason he assigns for it is, that the English, if they found their usual entertainments to be altogether prohibited, might be induced to relapse into idolatry. I cannot compare Gregory's compliances to the Jesuitical artifices practised in after ages among the Chinese, because it appears that idolatry was absolutely prohibited, and the real Christian religion taught in Britain: but a man who knew human nature so well as this bishop did, might have foreseen the practical excesses which his licence would encourage, and should have committed to God himself the success of his own cause among the English.

Hearing * from Augustine of his miraculous powers, Gregory, who seems to have entertained no doubt of their reality, cautions him excellently against pride and presumption on their account, informs him that they were given him more for the sake of the new converts than of himself, and teaches him the all-important lesson of humility. He wrote also to Ethelbert, to congratulate, instruct, and exhort him, setting before him the example of the great Constantine, and pressing him to extend the propagation of the Gospel.† His zeal was much animated by the near pros-

* [Bede, i. c. 31, and 32.]

† Hume (Chap. 1. of his History of England) represents this exhortation to extend the propagation of the Gospel as inconsistent with the conduct of Augustine, "who had thought proper, in the commencement of his mission, to assume the appearance of the greatest lenity." Thus it is that men, more malignant than intelligent in Christian history, pervert facts, and represent pious men as hypocritical in their moderate conduct. The truth is, neither Constantine, nor Theodosius, nor Gregory, nor any of the ancients, ever compelled any man to become a Christian, either in the beginning or progress of religion. Nor does any thing of the kind appear in Gregory's letter to Ethelbert. But he, like Theodosius, directed that the worship of idols should be destroyed. Men were allowed to remain aloof all their days from Christianity if they pleased. Forced conversions, like those of popery in after ages, were as yet unknown; and persecution, the other mark of Antichrist, as yet existed not in the Church. It is very possible that the indifferent spirit of our times may be disgusted with that part of the conduct of Theodosius and Gregory, which related to the destruction of idols, and call it persecution. Be it so: I have (in Chap. xvi. Cent. iv.) examined this point with as much exactness as I can. But let not men of sincere piety and fervent charity for the good of souls, be represented as if they were hypocritical in their moderation at first, and as if they intended to establish tyranny afterwards. Their plan was, whether it be agreeable to present reigning maxims or not, to compel no man to receive Christianity, and at the same time to render the practice of idolatry impracticable. I believe many, who have written against them as persecutors, have not clearly understood this distinction. All I contend for here is this, they acted consistently and uprightly.

pect which he himself had of the end of the world, and of which he failed not to inform the king of Kent:* the latter reigned fifty years, and died in 616. As a statesman he was great, as a Christian greater still. And few princes in any age were richer blessings to their subjects than Ethelbert and Bertha.

A.D. 616.

But this fine gold was not without some alloy! Before these events there existed, in Wales particularly, a British Church. Augustine, willing to establish a uniformity of discipline and customs in the island, invited the Welsh bishops to a conference, and began to admonish them to enter into Christian peace and concord, that with hearts united they might join in evangelizing the Pagans. The Britons observed Easter at a season different from that of the Roman Church, and did many other things contrary to her customs. The conference proved fruitless; the Britons would hearken to no prayers or exhortations; and Augustine in the close had recourse to a miraculous sign.† A blind man was introduced to be healed. We are told that the Britons had no success; but that Augustine's prayers were heard, and his sight was restored. The Britons were induced to confess, that Augustine was sent of God, but pleaded the obstinacy of their people, as a reason for their non-compliance. A second synod was appointed, attended by seven British bishops, and many of their learned men, belonging to the famous monastery at Bangor, of which Dinoth was at that time the abbot. Before these came to the synod, they asked the advice of a person of reputed sanctity, whether they should give up their own traditions on the authority of Augustine or not. Let humility, said he, be the test, and if you find, when you come to the synod, that he rises up to you at your approach, obey him; if not, let him be despised by you. On so precarious an evidence, it seems, did he rest the proof of humility. It happened, that Augustine continued sitting on their arrival, which might easily have taken place without any intentional insult: the Britons were however incensed, and would hearken to no terms of reconciliation. Augustine proposed to them to agree with him only in three things, leaving other points

* Gregory had already written to queen Bertha, and stimulated her zeal to labour for the conversion of her husband. [S. Greg. Ep. 59. l. 9. Ind. 4. Gregory calls this Queen Adilberga.]

† Bed. b. ii. c. 2.

of difference undecided, namely, to observe Easter at the same time with the rest of the Christian world, to administer baptism after the Roman manner, and to join with Augustine in preaching the Gospel to the English. In all other things, says he, we will bear you with patience. The Britons were inexorable, and refused to acknowledge his authority. "If you will not have peace with brethren," said the archbishop of Canterbury, roused at length into an unbecoming "warmth, you will have war with enemies; and if you will not preach to the English the way of life, you will suffer death at their hands." It happened afterwards, that, in an invasion of the Pagan Saxons of the North, the Bangorian monks were cruelly destroyed, though long after the death of Augustine. He died * in peaceable possession of the See of Canterbury, after having lived to see the Gospel propagated with increasing success. He ordained Mellitus and Justus bishops; London was brought into the pale of the Church, and the southern parts of the island found the benefit of his labours, and of those of his auxiliaries.

I shall close the story of English affairs with the death of Augustine, which happened early in the 7th century. And as the ground I am now upon has been disputed, I am willing to lay open all the information which antiquity can give us. Let us hear some other accounts of these transactions.

Writers, who have been studious of the honour of our country, tell us, that when Augustine came into England he found seven bishops and an archbishop supplied with godly governors and abbots, and that the church was in goodly order, at Bangor particularly: that Dinoth the abbot showed Augustine that they owed him no subjection: that their bishops had been independent of Rome: that the bishops of Rome had no more right to their obedience than other Christians had, and that the bishop of Caerleon upon Usk was their proper superior; † and that in revenge for this honest assertion of their independency, the Kentish king procured the invasion and slaughter of the British monks mentioned above.

How Christianity was afterwards propagated in our island, and how the disputes between the Roman and British

* [Bede ii. c. 3.]

† Galfridus Monometensis, b. iv. c. 12. See Nicholls on the Common Prayer.

churches terminated, will properly fall under our consideration hereafter. In the meantime, the injustice of a certain writer * to the memory of Gregory, in accusing him of exercising tyranny over the British Church, is very glaring. We have, by an early association of ideas, been so habituated to condemn every thing that is Roman in religion, that we are not easily open to conviction on this subject. It should, however, be remembered, that not the least revenue could accrue to Gregory from the conversion of Britain; nor did he suggest or intimate any lucrative plan, directly or indirectly. If there were any improper steps taken, they must not be charged to a selfish or interested spirit, such as that which has since animated the papacy. The doctrines avowedly and earnestly taught by Gregory and his followers, were the doctrines of Grace; and though no account of the faith of the Welsh monks is given us, there is great reason, on account of the Pelagian leaven of our island, to fear it was not so truly Christian as that of Gregory. That they were uncharitable, appears incontestable from their neglect of the Saxon Pagans, and their obstinate refusal to hearken to any advice on that head. And the reader has already had a view of their manners, very different from the flattering account of Galfridus. The extent of the British Church, before the arrival of Augustine, was so inconsiderable, that when Gregory planned the hierarchy of this island, it is probable he knew little of the very existence of such a Church. The fault of ambitious encroachment must, therefore, be laid to Augustine. Seduced he undoubtedly was, according to the common superstition of the age, by an excessive zeal for uniformity. And that admirable method of uniting zeal for establishments with a spirit of toleration, which was discovered toward the close of the last century, was as yet unknown. The Britons had been independent, and they had a right to continue so; but I believe, from all appearances, that Augustine's desire to make a connexion with the Romans sprang from charitable views.

What could be the meaning of his wishing the Britons to baptize after the Roman manner? This question has exercised the critical talents of Authors. After all, as baptism

* Bower's Lives of Popes, Vol. ii. Gregory.

by trinal immersion was then the Roman mode, this seems to give the most natural account of the circumstance.

The charge of Galfridus, in accusing the Romans of employing the pagans to murder the British, is too absurd to merit any serious notice. Augustine died long before it happened. Gregory himself was deceased before the controversies between Augustine and Dinoth took place. He has been accused of extreme inconsistency, in being imperious toward heretics, and indulgent toward pagans* and Jews. But a more exact acquaintance with cases would enable men to form a better judgment. Gregory, like all real good men, was averse to use violent methods in proselyting; he knew that conversion, if sincere, must be voluntary. But when men once have been received into the Christian pale, the same zeal which laboured for their conversion, is studious for their uniform attachment to Christian fundamentals. It was no breach of charity in Gregory to attempt to hinder the promotion of a Donatist in the Christian church in Africa, and such an attempt was very consistent with that charity which forbade the persecution of the Jews.

On the whole, Gregory's conduct with respect to our island appears one of the most shining efforts of Christian charity. His missionaries, in general, acted laudably; and the real establishment of Christianity was, under God, effected by their means. There was a stain of rivalry and jealousy, as we have seen, which appeared in their conduct; but they were men.

CHAP. VIII.

THE WORKS OF GREGORY.

THIS great prelate, worn out at length with labours and diseases, slept in Jesus in the year 604,† after he had enjoyed, shall I say—or endured, his bishopric, thirteen years and six months. No man in any age ever gave himself up more sincerely to the service of God, and the benefit of his fellow-creatures. Power in him was a voluntary servitude, undertaken not

Death of Gregory, A.D. 604.

* Bower.

† Fleury, b. xxxvi. 51. [Vit. S. Greg. per Joan. Diac. Lib. iv. c. 68.]

for himself, but for all the world. Even the growth of superstition, with which he was strongly infected, while it secured to him the cheerful obedience of the laity, contributed nothing to his ease or secular emolument. The belief of the Roman bishop's succession to Peter, which he found prevalent in Europe, was accidentally strengthened by his eminent piety and his laborious virtues.

Had he even been disposed to extend his authority to much greater lengths, all the world would have been prone to submit to his decrees; so firmly was the opinion of his integrity established among men. His conscience, however would not suffer him to carry any thing farther than precedents had sanctioned; and who, especially in an age of superstitious credulity, could doubt the justice of his pretensions, while the pre-eminence was so painful, so disinterested, and so beneficially exerted?

For I cannot persuade myself to call him Pope. He pretended not to any thing like infallibility, nor did he ever attempt any thing like a secular domination. The seeds of Antichrist were vigorously shooting indeed; and the reputation of Gregory doubtless contributed much to mature the poisonous plant. But idolatry, spiritual tyranny, and the doctrine of the merit of works, the three discriminating marks of the papacy, had, as yet, no settled establishment at Rome. Had this man lived in our age, he would doubtless have beheld, with astonishment, on the one hand, the worldly spirit of many Christian pastors so called, and on the other the impiety of numerous infidels who are continually railing against the religious. His mind, naturally vigorous, industrious and active, would doubtless have shaken off the gloom and credulity of superstition; but he would have been amazed to hear the pompous pretences to philosophy, in which every juvenile sciolist indulges himself. He would have examined the fruits, and have been at a loss to conceive with what propriety the term philosopher could be applied to sceptics, blasphemers, atheists, levellers, and sensualists. He would, as a bishop, have tried what could be done to stem the torrent, and have exerted in the way of discipline, which was his peculiar talent, his usual address, mildness and resolution. He would have mourned over his beloved England,* if he had seen her so absurdly

* The gratitude of Bede has (b. ii. c. 1. Eccl. Hist.) led him to apply to

enslaved to ideas of mistaken liberty, as to spurn at decent rules of discipline, and to discountenance, as tyranny, godly attempts to introduce and support them. He would have been ready to say, "this people are enemies to their own good;" he would have pitied them, wept and consoled himself with his usual refuge, the views of a better world, and have done what good was still in his power, by the example of a holy life, by painful preaching, and by pious writings.

Of these last we have many still extant. He particularly excelled in devotional composition. Litanies had been used in the West before his time, in calamitous seasons, as during plague or famine. These were collected, and the choicest parts selected from them, and compiled, through the care of Gregory, into one large litany, not much different from that used by the Church of England at this day. It was much corrupted afterwards in the popish times, was reformed by Hermanus, archbishop of Cologne, in the days of Luther, and afterwards improved by our reformers.

The Litany compiled by Gregory.

But the Church of England is not only indebted to Gregory for the Litany. In his Sacramentary he embodied the collects of the ancient Church, and improved old, or made new ones. Gelasius, before him, had appointed public prayers, composed by himself or others. These were all placed in the offices by Gregory. And by a comparison of our Book of Common Prayer with his Sacramentary, it is evident, that almost all the collects for Sundays, and the principal festivals in the Church of England, were taken out of the latter. To me it appears to be an advantage, that our reformers followed antiquity so much in the work. The purification of the ancient services from the corrupt and idolatrous mixtures of popery, was as strong an indication of their judgment as the composition of prayers altogether new could have been, which, however, they scrupled not to introduce in various parts of the Liturgy. From the brief account I have given,* it appears, that the Service

Gregory the words of St. Paul in regard to the Corinthians. As an Englishman who felt his obligations to Gregory, he says, "the seal of his apostleship are we in the the Lord." The testimony of antiquity to Gregory's beneficent piety toward this island is uniform.

* Nicholls on Book of Common Prayer.

of our Church is far more ancient than the Roman Missal, properly speaking. And whoever has attended to the superlative simplicity, fervour, and energy of the prayers, and of the collects particularly, will have no hesitation in concluding, that they must have been composed in a time of true evangelical light and godliness. It is impossible indeed to say how early some parts of the Liturgy were written; but doubtless they are of very high antiquity. Many persons, in dark times, and under the disadvantage of slothful ignorant pastors, have been enlightened and nourished through their medium, and not a few, I trust, of my readers can justly confess with me, how much their devotion has been assisted by the public use of them. Let any unprejudiced person compare with the Liturgy several forms of prayer composed in modern times, and he will find an unction to attend the former, of which the latter is destitute. The present age is certainly much tinctured, in general, with a sceptical, philosophic spirit, which in its nature is not favourable to the production of devotional compositions.

The historical evidence hence resulting of the religious spirit of the times is great. The Western Church was far from being wholly corrupt in the close of the sixth century.* The doctrines of grace revived by Augustine were still predominant: divine life was much clogged indeed with the asthma of superstition; but its pulse was yet vigorous. I close this digression, if it may be called one, with remarking, that the continued use of these liturgies in the churches of the West, demonstrates the concurrent testimony of antiquity in favour of evangelical doctrine.

Of Gregory's epistles nothing more is needful to be added to the numerous extracts from them, which have supplied me with materials for his history.

His exposition of the book of Job is very voluminous. In a letter to Leander prefixed to it, he speaks of the tripartite sense, according to the ideas of Augustine, with sufficient justness and accuracy; yet through fondness for system he carries his point too far, so as to destroy sometimes the literal sense, after the vicious mode of Origen. We may believe him, when he describes

Gregory's exposition of the book of Job.

* That beautiful and sublime ode, called Te Deum, ascribed, though not with certainty, to Ambrose, was incontestibly used in the Church before the middle of the sixth century.

the correspondence of the subject to his own bodily afflictions; and he frankly owns his neglect of language and style. Few readers will be tempted to search the work throughout, on account of the heaviness of his manner, and the total want of elegance. Yet piety and humility are every where predominant; and though it can by no means be called a just commentary on the book of Job, he in general avoids deviations from the analogy of faith, by the evangelical purity of his frame and temper, and he had, I doubt not, real communion with God in the work. Let us hear his humble confession at the close; it deserves the serious notice of authors, and in that most salutary science of self-knowledge, demonstrates a proficiency worthy of a follower of Augustine.

"Having finished my work, I see I must return to myself.* The human mind is frequently bewildered, even when it attempts to speak correctly. For while we study propriety of language, we are drawn out of ourselves, and are apt to lose simplicity. From speaking in public let me return to the court of the heart; let me call my thoughts to a serious consultation with a view to discern myself, that I may observe whether I have spoken evil inadvertently, or good in a wrong spirit. For then only is real good spoken in a right spirit, when we mean by it to please him alone from whom we receive it. I am not conscious of having said evil; yet I will not maintain that I am absolutely innocent in this respect. The good which I have spoken I have received from above, and it is less good, through my sinfulness. For, averting my contemplation from words and sentences, the leaves and branches, and narrowly inspecting the root of my intention, I know that I meant earnestly to please God: but the desire of human praise insensibly mixes with this intention. I discover this slowly and afterwards, and find that the execution corresponds not with the first intention. While we really mean to please God at first, the love of human praise steals into the mind, and overtakes and accompanies the pure design; as in eating, what was begun through necessity and in innocence, terminates too often in excess.—If we are strictly examined by the divine Judge, how can we escape? Our

* [Lib. xxxv. in c. 42. c. 16.]

evils are our own without mixture, and our good things are defiled with impurity. What I feel within, I lay open to my reader. In expounding I have not concealed what I think; in confessing I hide not what I suffer.—I beg every reader to pray for me. If the value of his prayers and of my exposition be compared, he will have the advantage. He receives from me only words; but repays me with tears of supplication."

His Pastoral Care is a monument of the author's intense seriousness. I have already observed in many Christian pastors, and in Gregory as eminently as in most, a very strong sense of the importance of the clerical office, which rebukes the presumption of moderns more keenly than any words of mine can do. With the antients scarcely any person, however qualified, seemed adequate to the cure of souls; with us every stripling undertakes it without fear or hesitation. The treatise itself deserves to be read throughout by every candidate for the pastoral office. I know not how to select any parts of it particularly, and its brevity forbids and discourages all attempts at abridgment.*

Gregory's Pastoral Care.

The exposition of the Canticles is worthy of the godly spirit of Gregory. I shall hazard a quotation or two, which I doubt not will correspond with the sensations of minds acquainted spiritually with Jesus Christ, however the profane may ridicule, and the phlegmatic may censure. It is worth while to show, that a spirit of union with Christ has ever been felt in his Church.

Gregory's exposition of the Canticles.

On the first verse of the Canticles he says, "Let him whom I love above all, nay alone, let him come to me, that he may touch me with the sweetness of his inspiration. For when I feel his influence, I leave myself by a sudden change, and being melted, am transformed into his likeness. The holy mind is disgusted with all things which it feels from the body,

* Should the young candidate for the ministry object, as he justly may, the difficulty of meeting with this work of Gregory, let him substitute in its place Bishop Burnet's treatise on the same subject. It is to be lamented that so valuable a book is so little read and known, and that while the public taste has called for repeated editions of inflammatory politics, this treasure of pastoral information is dwindled into an oblivion little short of contempt. [Had Milner lived at this day, he would no doubt have recommended *Bridges on the Christian Ministry*, a much more valuable work than that of Bishop Burnet.]

and desires to become altogether spiritual ; and while sensual objects murmur around, it flies into spiritual things, and desires to hide itself in them. Therefore it desires the loving-kindness of the Lord, because without that it feels no power to approach him."

On the words, " Draw me, we will run after thee," he observes, " Divine grace prevents us.—He, who is drawn, runs, because being strengthened by divine love he passes over all obstacles." [v. 3.]

The defective taste and learning of his age forbid us to expect any very accurate and solid exposition of so difficult a prophet as Ezekiel. In fact, it is in occasional passages, independent of system, that Gregory shines. I single out a passage as an instance of this : * " Generally those who most excel in divine contemplation, are most oppressed with temptation. By the first the soul is lifted up to God, by the second it is pressed down into itself. Were it not for this the mind would fall into pride. There is, by the divine disposition, a wonderful temperature in this subject, that the saint may neither rise too high, nor sink too low."

Observe how divinely, in one of his homilies on the Gospels,† he speaks concerning the teaching of the Holy Spirit. On the words in St. John's Gospel, He (the Spirit) shall teach you all things, he says, " Unless the Spirit be with the heart of the hearer, the word of the teacher is barren. Let no man attribute to the teacher what he understands from his mouth ; for, unless there be an internal teacher, the tongue of the external one labours in vain. Why is there such a difference in the sensations of hearers, all hearing the same words ? It is to be ascribed to this special teaching. John himself in his epistle teaches the same, ' the anointing teaches you of all things.' " It is plain that the Spirit of the Lord was not departed, as yet, from the Roman Church, while his internal instructions, despised so fearlessly by the profane, and scrutinized so malignantly by many orthodox professors in our days, were regarded with so much simplicity and reverence.

His dialogues, if indeed they be his, or be not much interpolated, dishonour his memory by the excess of superstition.

* [Hom. in Ezek. Lib. ii. Hom. 14. in c. 40. v. 4, 5. tom. 1. p. 1257.]

† [In Evang. l. ii. Hom. 30. tom. 1. p. 1456.]

Thus far of the first of the Gregories; it will not be saying enough in his praise, though it is a truth, that it would have been to the advantage of the reputation of the Roman Church if he had been the last of that name.

CHAP. IX.

WRITERS OF THIS CENTURY.

FULGENTIUS adorned the beginning, and Gregory the close of this century, which produced no other authors of equal merit. And the decay in learning and knowledge was so great, that I shall detain the reader a very little time on this article.

Ennodius,* bishop of Pavia, wrote against those, who affirmed, that man could only choose evil. With gross ignorance of the connexion and scope of St. Paul's argument, he quotes his words in the Epistle to the Romans, ch. vii. as favourable to his views, "For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not:" thus ascribing to man, as such, what the apostle evidently speaks of as descriptive of the regenerate.† He maintains that man by nature has power to turn himself to God, and deduces from the contrary doctrine the consequences which the advocates for the doctrine of free-will in all ages have done from the days of Cicero, who, it is remarkable, reasons exactly in the same manner.

On the other hand, John Maxentius,‡ a Scythian monk, in company with a number of monks, his brethren, strenuously defended the doctrines of grace. In a confession of their faith is this sentence: § "that free-will, since the entrance of sin, has of itself no other power but that of choosing some carnal good and pleasure,‖ and that it can neither desire nor will, nor do any thing for eternal life, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit."

So remarkable a confession would seem to show some distinct knowledge of the depravity of the heart. Maxentius and his brethren were ill-treated by Hormisdas, bishop of

* [J. Trithem. de Script. Eccles. c. 203. Aubert. Miræi Auct. c. 126.]
† [Ep. 19. in Gallandii Bibl. tom. xi.] ‡ [Aubert. Miræi Auct. c. 125.]
§ [J. Maxent. Professio in Bibl. Patr. tom. 4. p. 540. ed. 1610.]
‖ Du Pin, Cent. vi.

Rome, a bold and dextrous politician, of whose theological knowledge and practical piety I find no proofs. He accused them of turbulence and self-conceit, and after a year's attendance at Rome they were expelled thence by his order. I cannot find that Hormisdas gave any decided opinion on the subject himself; probably he had never studied it; but he acted imperiously and decisively. Maxentius wrote with vigour in defence of the doctrines of grace, and I wish I could gratify the reader with a larger account of a man, who was counted worthy to suffer shame for the faith of Christ. The controversy between the defenders of grace and of human power was still alive, and the Western Church continued still divided upon it.

Facundus,* bishop of Hermiana in Africa, deserves to be mentioned for the sake of one sentence :† "The faithful, in receiving the Sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, receive his body and his blood; not that the bread is properly his body, and the cup his blood; but because they contain in them the mystery of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." ‡ Though it makes no part of our system to confute the particular points of popery, I could not omit so clear a testimony against transubstantiation.

The Western Church is indebted for historical information to Gregory of Tours; the Eastern, to Evagrius. It must be confessed that they are inelegant and injudicious writers. They had the literary taste of this century.

The truly evangelical second council of Orange has been already reviewed. The second council of Mascon,§ held in 585, is worthy of notice. They were very zealous for the observation of Sunday. Let none follow any business on this day, say they: let none yoke oxen, or prosecute suits of law; but let all the world apply themselves to sing the praises of God. They decree penalties against sabbath-breakers. An advocate, who was guilty of the crime, was to be driven from the bar; a peasant or a slave to receive some stripes. They exhort Christians also to spend the evening of Sunday in prayers. They forbid bishops to keep birds and dogs for game. They ordain the celebration of a Synod

The second council of Mascon, A.D. 585. [Can. 1.]

[Can. 13.]

* [Isid. Hisp. de Script. Eccl. c. 19. and J. Trithem. c. 208.]
† [Lib. ix. c. 5.] ‡ Du Pin, Facundus. § [or Macon. tom. v. Conc. p. 979.]

[Can. 20.] every three years in a place appointed by the bishop of Lyons and king Gontramus. A proof may hence be drawn that some spirit of genuine religion was still preserved in France.

CENTURY VII.

CHAP. I.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

THE diversity of circumstances in different ages of the Church constantly admonishes an historian, who loves method and perspicuity, to vary the arrangement of his materials. No abstract rules, but the circumstances of each period, should direct him in this matter. In the century before us, barren and unpromising as it is for the most part, Great Britain shone with distinguished lustre.—As she was a world within herself, her ecclesiastical affairs were little connected with those of the Continent. Hence the propriety of reviewing them by themselves.—In this subject I shall closely follow the venerable Bede, whose narration extends to the year 731.—Though much of his history is fabulous and superstitious, it is still of the greatest value, because it is the only light which we have concerning the progress of the Gospel in our own country for several generations; and some rays of truth, piety, and good sense, now and then break out in the historian amidst the clouds of legendary romance.

After the death of Augustine, Laurentius, the first archbishop of Canterbury, whom he had ordained, succeeded to that See. He trode * in the steps of his predecessor, and laboured to promote the best interests of the English by frequent preaching of the word, and by a diligent and useful example. I doubt not the sincerity of this prelate; though seduced by the charms of a nominal unity, he laboured, as the first missionary Augustine had done, to bring the British Churches to a conformity with the Church of Rome.

* Bede, b. ii. c. 4.

He was actuated by the same subtile spirit of selfish ambition, of which even the best men in all ages have not been void; it operates imperceptibly, through the native energy of in-dwelling sin. The papist, the national churchman, and the sectary, are each liable to its influence, though in truly regenerate spirits there exists, likewise, a divine principle, by the operation of which the sordid views of secular gain are entirely excluded. In this manner I would appreciate the characters of the Romish missionaries in England. Their disinterested labours, just views of Christian doctrine, and holy and unblemished lives, ought to have exempted them from the intemperate censures of writers, who seem to think an indiscriminate aversion to the Church of Rome to be one of the principal excellencies of a protestant historian.*

Laurentius, in conjunction with Mellitus, bishop of London, and Justus, bishop of Rochester, endeavoured to reduce the "Scots, who inhabited Ireland"† to a conformity with the English Church. The three prelates wrote to them with this view, and declared themselves to be sent by the Roman See to propagate the Gospel among the pagan nations. Laurentius complained of the bigotry of a certain Irish bishop, who, coming to Canterbury, refused to eat at the same table, or even in the same house with him. The archbishop could not prevail either with the Britons or with the Irish to enter into his views. "Even the present times," says our author, "declare how little success he had." At the period in which Bede concludes his history, the greatest part of the British churches still remained distinguished from the English. The bishops of Rome continued to superintend the latter; and while Ethelbert lived, the Gospel flourished. This prince died after a reign of fifty-six years, twenty-one years after he had embraced Christianity, and was buried by the side of his deceased queen Bertha. Among other benefits which the English derived from him,

* I advert, particularly, to Bower's Lives of the Popes, and to Warner's Ecclesiastical History of our own country. Their laborious collection of facts deserves commendation. I avail myself of all the helps which offer, for the supply of materials. But, I mean to extol the Church of Christ, wherever I can find her; nor should a Roman dress, when she appears in it, convey any prejudice to my mind.

† Bede's own words, which demonstrate that the Irish were anciently called Scots.

there was a code of laws formed after the example of the Romans,* which was still extant in Bede's time, and was particularly calculated to protect the persons and property of the Church.

His son and successor Eadbald not only despised Christianity, but also lived in incest with his father's wife. Whence all, who had embraced the Gospel through motives purely secular, were induced to relapse into idolatry. Sabereth, king of the East Saxons, who had followed the example of Ethelbert who was his uncle, being deceased, his three sons became joint heirs of his kingdom. Immediately they resumed the idolatry, which they had intermitted a little in their father's life-time, and encouraged their subjects to do the same. These princes observing the bishop of London to distribute the bread of the Eucharist in the church, asked why he did not give it to them as he had done to their father, and as he did at that very time to the people. "If you will be washed, replied Mellitus, in the same laver of regeneration in which your father was, you may partake of the same sacred bread: but if ye despise the laver of life, ye cannot partake of the bread of life." We will not, said they, enter into that fountain; we do not know that we need it, yet we choose to eat of that bread. In vain did the upright pastor seriously and diligently admonish them, that it was not possible for any person remaining uncleansed from sin to partake of the communion: in a rage they declared, "If you will not gratify us in so small a matter, you shall not remain in our province." They thereupon ordered him to be gone with his associates.

Mellitus, thus expelled, came into Kent to consult with Laurentius and Justus. The three bishops agreed to leave the country, that they might serve God with freedom elsewhere, rather than remain among enemies without fruit. Mellitus and Justus waiting the issue, retired first into France. The three princes not long after were slain in battle, but their subjects remained still incorrigible.

Laurentius intending to follow the two bishops, employed himself in prayer in the church during the silent hours of the night, with much agony and many tears, en-

* Bede, ii. c. 5.

treating God to look upon the state of the English Church, which, after such promising beginnings, seemed now on the eve of a total dissolution. Next morning he paid a visit to the king, who struck at last with horror for his crimes, and relenting, when he appeared in imminent danger of losing his Christian instructors for ever, forbade his departure, reformed his own life and manners, was baptized, and from that time became a zealous supporter of the faith.*

Eadbald was determined to show the sincerity of his zeal. He recalled Mellitus and Justus from France, after a year's exile. Justus was reinstated in Rochester; but Mellitus could not recover his See. The Londoners preferred idolatry, and Eadbald had not the same power which his father had possessed in that city to oblige them to receive him. So far, however, as his influence extended, he exerted it for the cause of Christ, and from the time of his conversion, adorned the Gospel, and propagated it among his people.

Laurentius being deceased, Mellitus was appointed the third archbishop of Canterbury, while Justus still presided at Rochester. These two bishops governed the English Church with much care and labour.† Mellitus, after having given the most undoubted proofs of genuine piety, and presided over the diocese of Canterbury five years, died in the year 624, and was succeeded by Justus.

Death of Mellitus, A.D. 624.

England was still governed by the Saxon Heptarchy. Seven kingdoms, often at war with one another, and also with the old native Britons, exhibited in our island scenes of the most unpleasant nature. Nor is any portion of our history in a secular view less interesting. Nevertheless in

* Bede, ii. c. 6.

I was unwilling to introduce into the narrative the story of St. Peter's whipping of Laurentius that night in the church, and reproving of him for his cowardice; whence he was said to have been induced to wait upon Eadbald next morning, who was struck, it seems, with remorse at the sight of the stripes which the bishop had received. Stories of this sort were innumerable in those times. The steady perseverance of Eadbald, and the entire change both of his private and public conduct, demonstrate the reality of his conversion. He most probably retained an inward reverence for the religion in which he had been instructed in his childhood, against which his grand objection seems to have been the love of a dissolute life. The Lord honoured the prayers of Laurentius with success, and recovered the English Church at the last extremity. The substance of the narrative remains entire, abstracted from the legend which disgraces it.

† Bede, [ii. c. 7.]

this dull period it pleased God to show the power of his grace among our ancestors. Hitherto Kent almost alone had been illuminated; but the Gospel was now introduced into the North, where reigned Edwin, king of the Northumbrians. And a woman was once more honoured as the instrument of salvation to the king her husband, and to many of his subjects. Edwin had sent to Eadbald to desire his sister Ethelburg or Tate * in marriage. The Kentish prince, with that Christian sincerity which had ever distinguished him since his conversion, answered, that it was not lawful to marry his sister to an infidel. Edwin replied, that he would certainly grant free liberty of conscience to the princess and to her attendants, adding that he himself would receive the same religion if it appeared more worthy of God. Upon this Eadbald consented, and sent his sister into Northumberland,† attended by Paulinus, who was consecrated bishop of the North of England by Justus in the year 625. The reason for sending him was, that by daily exhortations and administration of the communion he might guard the young princess and her attendants from the infection of idolatry. But Providence had a higher and more extensive aim, and infused into the heart of Paulinus ‡ a strong desire to propagate the Gospel in these regions. He laboured much both to preserve Ethelburg and her attendants in Christian simplicity, and to draw over some of the Pagans to the faith. But though he preached a long time, "still, says Bede, the god of this world blinded the minds of unbelievers." After some time Edwin was very near being murdered by an assassin whom the king of the West Saxons sent against him, and the same night his queen was delivered of a daughter. While the king was thanking his gods for the birth of a daughter, Paulinus began to give thanks to the Lord Christ. Edwin told him, that he himself would worship Christ, and renounce all his gods, if he would give him victory over the king of the West Saxons, who had attempted to murder him, and, for the present, he

Paulinus made bishop of the North of England, A.D. 625.

* Bede, ii. c. 9.

† This term meant in those times all that part of England which lies to the north of the Humber.

‡ He was one of the monks whom Gregory had sent into England, and possessed much of the pious and zealous spirit of that renowned prelate.

gave the young infant to Paulinus to be baptized. She was the first Northumbrian who was admitted into the visible Church by the ordinance of baptism; and twelve of the king's family were baptized on that occasion. Edwin, collecting his forces, vanquished, the West Saxons, and killed or reduced into subjection all who had conspired against him. Returning victorious, he determined no longer to serve idols. He was, however, in no hurry to be baptized, but resolved to examine seriously the grounds and reasons of Christianity. He attended Paulinus's instructions, held conferences with prudent and knowing persons, and was himself observed frequently to commune with his own heart, in silence, and anxiously to inquire what was true religion. All who use his methods will not fail to know the truth.

Edwin was doubtless in good earnest, and at length held a consultation with his intimate friends and counsellors, "What is," says he, "this hitherto unheard-of doctrine, this new worship?" Coifi, the chief of the priests, answered, "See you, O king, what this is, which is lately preached to us? I declare most frankly what I have found to be true, that the religion we have hitherto followed is of no value. If the gods could do any thing, they would more particularly distinguish me with their favours who have served them so diligently. If the new doctrine be really better, let us embrace it." Another of the nobles observed, that [the present life of man seems in comparison of that which is unknown to us, like the swift flight of a sparrow through the house, when the king is sitting at supper in the hall, a fire burning in the midst and the room being heated while a tempest of rain and snow is raging without; the sparrow flies through, entering at one door and passing out at another, he feels indeed a temporary warmth, and then returns to winter again and vanishes out of your sight.] "Such," says he, "is the life of man; but what goes before, or comes after, is buried in profound darkness. Our ignorance then, upon such principles as hitherto we have embraced, is confessed; but if this new doctrine really teach us any thing more certain, it will deserve to be followed." These and similar * reflections were made by the king's counsellors. Coifi expressed also a de-

* Bede, ii. c. 13, 14.

sire to hear Paulinus preach, which, by the king's order, was complied with. The chief priest, having heard the sermon, exclaimed "I knew formerly, that what we worshipped was nothing; because the more studiously I sought for truth, the less I found it. Now I openly declare, that in this preaching appears the truth, which is able to afford us life, salvation, and eternal bliss. I advise that we instantly destroy the temples and altars, which we have served in vain." The king feeling the conviction with no less strength, openly confessed the faith of Christ, and asked Coifi, who should be the first man that should profane the idolatrous places. "I ought to do it," replied the priest, "I, who worshipped them in folly, will give an example to others in destroying them, by the wisdom given me from the true God." He immediately went to the temple and profaned it, rejoicing in the knowledge of the Most High, and ordered his companions to burn the building with its enclosures. The place was still shown in our author's time, not far from York to the east of the Derwent.

In the eleventh year of Edwin's reign, this prince, with all his nobles and very many of the commonalty, was baptized, 180 years after the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, and in the year of Christ 627. This was performed at York in a wooden oratory, in which Edwin had been first proposed as a catechumen for baptism. By the advice of Paulinus he afterwards began to build on the same spot a church of stone, which however he did not live to finish, but it was completed by Oswald, his successor. Paulinus, first bishop of York, continued for six years, till the death of Edwin, to preach the Gospel; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* Edwin's children were afterwards baptized; and so strong was the desire of his subjects for Christianity, that Paulinus coming with the king and queen to a royal villa, called Adgefrin, spent there thirty-six days in teaching and baptizing from morning till night. At another time he baptized, in the river Swale,† which flows near Catterick, a number of persons who resorted thither.

Edwin and his nobles, &c baptized, A.D. 627.

* They are Bede's words; the scriptural reader knows whence he borrowed them. Id. c. 14.

† Sualva, qui vicum juxta Cataractam præterfluit. [Giles reads without juxta.]

Many of these conversions may be supposed to have been the result of mere complaisance to the court. But there is every reason to believe, that there was a real effusion of the Spirit at this time. And, in the present age, when men profess much to think for themselves, it will not be easy to find a person in high life attending with a more cool and reasonable spirit to the nature and evidences of true religion, than Edwin and his nobles did at a time which we call extremely barbarous. They thought impartially, and they had the indispensable qualification of being serious in their researches.

Edwin induced also Carpwald,* king of the East Angles, to embrace the Gospel. Redwald, the father of this prince, had been baptized in Kent, but had been seduced by his wife into idolatry. Carpwald was succeeded by his brother Sibert, a man of singular zeal and piety, whose labours for the spiritual benefit of his subjects were much assisted by Felix, a Burgundian Christian. This person had received a commission from Honorius, the successor of Justus at Canterbury, to preach among the East Angles, which he did with great success, and lived and died bishop of Dummock.†

The zealous Paulinus preached also in Lincolnshire, the first province south of the Humber,‡ where the governor of Lincoln§ with his house was converted to God. Bede informs us that a friend of his heard an old person make this declaration, "I was baptized, together with a multitude of others, in the river Chanta‖ by Paulinus, in the presence of Edwin." Wonderful things are told us of the perfect peace, order, and justice which prevailed during the reign of the wise and pious king of Northumberland.

Attempts¶ were made all this time by the bishops of Rome, to induce the Irish to unite themselves to the English Church, but in vain. John the bishop of Rome wrote letters also into Ireland against the Pelagian heresy, which was reviving there.

Edwin,** after having six years served the cause of Christ, was slain in a battle which he fought with Carduella, a British prince, a Christian by profession, and with Penda, king of the Saxon principality of Mercia, a professed

* [Or Eorpwald.] † Now Dunwich in Suffolk. ‡ Bede, ii. c. 16.
§ Lindecolina. ‖ Now Trent. [Trehenta is the reading given by Giles.]
¶ [Bede, ii. c. 19.] ** [Bede. ii. c. 20.]

Pagan. It is remarkable that the British prince used his victory with savage barbarity, and our author complains that, to his times, the British Christians looked on the English only as Pagans. Paulinus, after this mournful event, retired with Edwin's queen into Kent, whence he had brought her. There being a vacancy at Rochester, he was by Eadbald, who still reigned in Kent, fixed in that See, which he held to his death. His deacon James, whom he had left in Northumberland, preserved still some remains of Christianity in a province now overrun by Pagans. Such are the vicissitudes of the Church in this world: her perfect rest is above.

The situation * of the North was, after this, deplorable. Cedwalla, a British king, tyrannized with the fiercest barbarity over the subjects of Edwin, till at length Oswald, his nephew, vanquished and slew him, and established himself in the kingdom. He had, in his younger days, lived an exile in Ireland, and had there been baptized. Desirous of evangelizing his people, he sent for a pastor out of Ireland, who, after he had made some fruitless attempts, returned into his own country, complaining of the intractable disposition of the Northumbrians. "It seems to me," said Aidan, a monk, who was present at his complaints, "that your austere manners and conduct towards them, were unsuitable to their state of extreme ignorance. They should be treated, like infants, with milk, till they become capable of stronger meat." The consequence was, what probably Aidan little expected; he was himself deputed by an Irish council to enter on the mission.

Character of Aidan the missionary.

The character of this missionary † would have done honour to the purest times. We may more confidently depend on the account given of him, because he belonged not to the Roman communion, to which Bede was superstitiously devoted, but was a schismatic in the observation of Easter, as all the Christians in the British Isles were, except the Saxons. To him Bede applies the expression, that "he had a zeal for God, though not FULLY ‡ according to knowledge." Oswald,

* [Bede, iii. c. 1, and 2.] † Bede, b. iii. c. 3, 4, 5.

‡ Non plene. Warner, by omitting the expression FULLY, misrepresents our venerable historian, as if he had looked on Aidan as wrong in point of knowledge altogether. In another place he invidiously compares

whom early education had rather prejudiced in favour of the same schism, gave him an episcopal See in the isle of Lindisfarn.* But there was a great difficulty which attended his ministry: Aidan spake English very imperfectly. Oswald himself, therefore, who thoroughly understood Irish, acted as his interpreter. The zeal of this monarch was indeed extraordinary, to induce him to take such pains. Encouraged by his protection, more Irish ministers came into the North of England, and churches were erected; the Gospel was preached, and Northumberland, by the zeal and piety of the new missionaries, recovered the ground which it had lost by the expulsion of Paulinus. Even to the year 716 the principles of evangelical piety flourished in the Irish school; at which time this people were reduced to the Roman communion.

Aidan himself was a shining example of godliness. He laboured to convert infidels and to strengthen the faithful. He gave to the poor whatever presents he received from the great, and employed himself with his associates in the Scriptures continually. He strictly avoided every thing luxurious, and every appearance of secular avarice or ambition: he redeemed captives with the money which was given him by the rich: he instructed them afterwards; and fitted them for the ministry.

The king was not inferior to the prelate in his endeavours to promote godliness.† Uncorrupt and humble in the midst of prosperity, he showed himself the benefactor of the poor and needy, and cheerfully encouraged every attempt to spread the knowledge and practice of godliness among men.

In the mean time Byrinus‡ was sent from Rome into Britain, who, arriving among the West Saxons, and finding

the laboriousness and simplicity of the Irish missionary with the pomp of the Roman pastors sent by Gregory. We have seen abundant proof of the integrity and diligence of the latter. The truth is, that though God is no respecter of persons, man is very apt to be so. Wherever he sends pastors fitted and commissioned by himself, genuine traces of their work appear, and leave salutary fruits behind them. The Irish Saint Columban, and after him Aidan, as well as the Roman missionaries of the Gregorian school, influenced by the same Holy Spirit, left wholesome vestiges of their labours in the British Isles, which extended even to distant ages. Had the former been Protestants, properly speaking, and the latter Papists, the same estimate ought to have been formed, though such a distinction in regard to those ages is chimerical.

* Now called Holy Island, four miles from Berwick.

† [Bede, iii. c. 6.] ‡ [Bede, iii. c. 7.]

them all pagans, laboured to instruct them. Cynigilsus, their king, the father-in-law of Oswald, received baptism from him. The two princes gave to Byrinus the city of Dorcinca;* where he resided as bishop, and the Gospel was propagated with success through this branch of the heptarchy.

The king of Kent died, A. D. 640. His son Earconbert destroyed all the idols in his dominions.

In Kent Eadbald died in the year 640,† and was succeeded by his son Earconbert, who reigned twenty-four years, was zealous in the support of godliness, and was the first Saxon king who totally destroyed all the idols in his dominions.

Oswald at length, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, was slain in battle by the same Penda, king of Mercia, who was mentioned before. A memorable instance of the unsearchable ways of Providence; Two kings, whose equals in piety and virtue are not easily found in any age, both lose their lives in battle with the same enemy, a barbarian and a pagan! But they served God not for worldly, but heavenly blesssings.

Providence was however preparing the way for the propagation of the Gospel through the whole heptarchy.‡ Young Penda, son of the tyrant of Mercia, desiring in marriage the daughter of Oswy, brother and successor to Oswald, his reception of Christianity was made the condition; and the young prince, we are told, on hearing the doctrines of the Gospel preached, was induced to declare, that he would become a Christian, even if Oswy's daughter were denied him. Two years before the death of old Penda, the son married the Northumbrian princess, and patronized Christianity in that part of his father's dominions which was committed to his government. But the latter renewed hostilities against Oswy, and at length was slain in battle.§ Oswy, now master of Mercia and Northumberland, applied himself to propagate Christianity among his new subjects. Through his influence also the Gospel was restored to the kingdom of the East Saxons; and London, which had rejected the ministry of Mellitus, again embraced the religion of Christ.

* Now Dorchester, near Oxford. † Bede, [iii. c. 8, and 9.]

‡ [Bede, iii. c. 21, and 24.]

§ The battle was fought between Oswy and Penda, near Loyden, now Leeds, in Yorkshire, at Winwidfield, on the river Winvaed, now Aire.

In this century, Kentigern, bishop of Glasgow in Scotland, being expelled from his See, founded a monastery, and a bishopric on the banks of the river Elwy in North Wales. Archbishop Usher,* quoting John of Tinmouth, says, there were in the abbey 965 monks, one of whom was named Asaph. Kentigern, being called back to Glasgow, appointed Asaph abbot and bishop of Llan-Elwy. Of Asaph it is recorded that he was a zealous preacher, and that he used to say, "they envy the salvation of souls who withstand the preaching of the Word." The See has since borne his name; and he seems to have had a spirit superior to the monastic superstition, in which he was educated.† Marianus Scotus, in his chronicle, says, in regard to this century, "Ireland was filled with Saints. Their schools were renowned for ages."‡

But it is time to bring the English Church history of this century to a close. That there was a real effusion of the Holy Spirit on England, so that numbers were turned from idols to the living God; the pastors, first of the Roman, and afterwards of the British communion, laboured in the work with simplicity and success, has been evidenced. We have had also several instances of the completion of that prophecy, "Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and queens thy nursing-mothers."§ But the zeal and purity of the Christian spirit seldom last much longer than thirty or forty years in any place. The native depravity of man gradually quenches the Spirit of God, and the power of godliness is soon buried, or at least very faintly subsists in the midst of factious contentions and worldly lusts. This I find to have been the case in the latter part of the century in England. Wilfrid, bishop of York, a very suspicious character, in his exile laboured indeed among the Frisians, and is said to have been the first missionary who taught that people. If he did any real good among them, it was the most useful part of his life; for in Britain he seems to have fomented turbulence and contention. However, he paved the way for more upright missionaries, whose labours in Friezeland shall be mentioned hereafter. The craft of Satan too commonly succeeds in fomenting divisions, even

* [De Antiq. Britan. Eccles. c. 15.] † Alban Butler, Vol. v. [May. 1.]
‡ Idem. [Note on St. Comgall. May 10.] § Isaiah xlix. 23.

among those who with equal sincerity are engaged in the best of causes. While such men as Paulinus and Aidan lived, the diversity of sentiments produced no great mischief. Afterwards, as depravity increased, and the spirit of faith and love grew colder, very hurtful disputes arose, to the scandal of the Gospel. The Roman Church, however, acquired more and more influence, though it was very far from pervading the whole of the British isles at the end of the century. But nothing particularly pertinent to the design of this history occurs. Let it suffice us to say, that our ancestors saw in this century a blessed time, the fruits of which will abide for ever.

CHAP. II.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN GERMANY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THE northern parts of Europe had still remained in the darkness of idolatry. In this century they were visited by the Most High. The Britons, Scots, and Irish, were honoured as the principal instruments in the work; and this circumstance affords an additional evidence to the account already given of the genuine spirit of godliness which prevailed in the British isles. The French had also their share in the blessed cause. I shall throw together the very imperfect hints which are preserved to us of these important transactions. Though the first instance more properly relates to France than to Germany, it may with no great impropriety be mentioned in this chapter. Omer, bishop of Tarvanne, the old metropolis of the Morini in Artois, laboured with success in the cultivation of a wilderness. Vice and idolatry were very predominant in his diocese; but by the assistance of Bertin, a Swiss, his kinsman, he was enabled to eradicate inveterate evils, and to civilize a race of barbarians.

The erection of many convents in Germany for the Scotch and Irish, some of which are still extant, is to be accounted for from the ecclesiastical connexions of their ancestors. Many persons travelled from Great Britain and Ireland with the laudable purpose of preaching Christ in

Batavia, Belgium, and Germany.* And however superstition might tarnish their labours, there must have been a nobler principle to induce men to undergo so much danger, with hardly any possible prospect of lucre or of fame. Mere philosophers are generally but too liberal in censure and raillery: we seldom, however, hear of them engaging in any work of so disinterested a nature. Only the love of God in Christ can support the spirit of men in such enterprizes.

Columban,† an Irish monk, distinguished from him of the same name, spoken of before, who was called "the Ancient," toward the close of the foregoing century had extirpated the remains of expiring paganism in France. He also passed the Rhine, and evangelized the Suevi,‡ the Boii,§ and other German nations. He laboured in the cause to his death, which happened in the year 615. Saint Gal,‖ one of his companions, laboured with much zeal about the lakes of Zurich and Constance. Near the latter lake, at a little distance from Bregent, he erected a monastery, which still bears his name. In fortitude and laboriousness he was inferior to none of the missionaries of this age. But we find very little worthy of being recorded concerning him. A. D. 615.

The account of Kilian,¶ another Irish missionary, is somewhat more satisfactory. He received a commission from the bishop of Rome, toward the end of the century, to preach to the infidels; and with some of his disciples he came to Wirtzburg upon the Mayne, where a pagan duke called Gosbert was governor. The duke received the Gospel, was baptized, and many followed his example. But he had married his brother's wife. The missionary united discretion with zeal, and deferred his admonitions on this head, till he found that his pupil the duke was firmly settled in the faith.** Kilian at length ventured to act the part of John the Baptist, and the event was in a great measure similar. Gosbert promised to obey, but delayed the execution of his promise till he should return from an expedition.

* Mosheim, Cent. vii. c. 1. † [Canisii Lect. Antiq. tom. 1. p. 772, &c.]
‡ This people inhabited the places between the Rhine and the Elbe.
§ Now Bavarians.
‖ [Theodor. Camp. de S. Magno in Canisii Antiq. Lect. tom. i. p. 653.]
¶ [Vit. et passio S. Mart. Kilian. in Canisii Antiq. Lect. tom. 3. p. 1.]
* * Fleury, b. xl. 38.

The mischief of procrastination against the light of conscience was never more strongly illustrated. In his absence Geilana, for that was the name of the German Herodias, procured the murder of Kilian and his companions. They were engaged in devotional exercises, and died with the patience of martyrs in the year 688. Gosbert was prevailed on by the artifices of Geilana to suffer the murderers to escape with impunity. But all the actors in this tragedy, Gosbert among the rest, came to an unhappy end; and there is no doubt but that in this case, as well as many others, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. Numbers of the eastern Franks had embraced Christianity, and sealed the ministry of Kilian. Barbatus, born in the territory of Benevento, in Italy, in the beginning of this century, was also a great ornament to it. Meditation on the Scriptures was his chief delight. He was acknowledged to excel in preaching. He acted as curate of Morcona near Benevento, and gave great offence by his faithfulness. By the malice of the people he was obliged to retire to Benevento. This town was possessed by the Lombards, who were chiefly Arians; many of them were indeed idolaters, though some were of the general Church, with their duke Arichis, a friend of Gregory I. Barbatus labouring there found the Christians, so called, very idolatrous. They worshipped a golden viper, and a tree on which the skin of a wild beast was hung. He preached and prayed a long time: at length the emperor Constans besieging Benevento, the wicked inhabitants were intimidated so far, as to repent of their idolatry. Barbatus was allowed to cut down the tree, and to melt the golden viper, of which he made a sacramental chalice. This man was appointed bishop of Benevento in 663, and destroyed every vestige of idolatry in the whole state. He lived afterwards to bear a testimony by his presence in the council of Constantinople, against the Monothelite heresy, and died in 682. See Butler's Lives.

Murder of Kilian and his companions, A.D. 688.

Barbatus made bishop of Benevento A.D. 663.

Died, A.D. 682.

Toward the conclusion of the century, Willibrord,* an English missionary, and eleven of his countrymen, crossed

* [Bede, l. v. c. 10, and 11.]

over the sea into Holland, to labour among the Friezelanders. But being ill-treated by the king of Friezeland who put one of their company to death,* they retired into Denmark. Returning, however, into Friezeland, in the year 693, they propagated divine truth with success. Willibrord was ordained bishop of Wilteburg † by the Roman prelate, and laboured in his diocese to his death; while his associates spread the Gospel through Westphalia and the neighbouring countries.‡

English missionaries ill-treated in Holland, retired into Denmark, A.D. 693.

It was in this century, the former part of it, according to the researches of one author,§ the latter part, according to those of another, ‖ that Bavaria received the Gospel from the ministry of Rupert, ¶ or Robert, bishop of Worms. He was invited by Theodo, duke of Bavaria. His ministry prospered, and he was appointed bishop of Saltzburgh. The increasing harvest required more missionaries: he therefore returned to his own country, and brought twelve assistants: from that time Christianity was established in Bavaria. Corbinian, another Frenchman, watered where Rupert had planted. Duke Theodo received him gladly. His son and successor Grimoald was induced to part with his wife, whom he had married contrary to the Levitical laws of matrimonial consanguinity; and so far as can be judged from very imperfect accounts, the Gospel was received with great sincerity in this country.**

Sometime after,†† Emmeram, an Aquitanian Frenchman, leaving his country and his large possessions, travelled to

* Mosheim, Cent. vii. c. 1. † Now Utrecht.

‡ Disen, an Irish monk, taught the Gospel in Ireland, France, and Germany. His labours were most remarkably crowned with success in the neighbourhood of Mentz.—Alb. Butler. § [Velserus de Rebus Boicis.] b. iv.

‖ Fleury, b. xli. 31. If Fleury's chronology be right, the greatest part of the narrative before us belongs to the next century.

¶ [Vit. S. Rupert. in Canisii Lect. Antiq. tom. 3. p. 2.]

** This missionary was remarkable for private devotion, as well as public labours. He reserved to himself a considerable portion of time every day for prayer and meditation. But from Alban Butler's account I learn, that Grimoald persecuted Corbinian on account of his faithfulness; and that Biltrude, the relict of Grimoald's brother, hired assassins to murder him. Both Grimoald and Biltrude perished miserably. If the former was induced to repentance at all, he seems to have relapsed. After the deaths of his persecutors, Corbinian returned to Frisengen, and laboured till his death, which happened in the year 730.

†† Velser. Id. [Meginfred. de S. Emmeram. in Canisii Lect. Antiq tom. 3. p. 1.]

Ratisbon, to spread the Gospel. He was well received by another Theodo, duke of Bavaria. He observed, that the Bavarians were, many of them at least, still addicted to idolatrous rites, which they mixed with Christianity. The old inhabitants were particularly guilty of these things. He laboured among them three years, preaching in all the towns and villages, and reserved for himself only the bare necessaries of life. His success was great, and his end was worthy of his profession. Lambert, a son of the duke, murdered him at length with savage barbarity. He had been offered a large revenue and a settlement at Ratisbon by Theodo, which he had refused, declaring that he only wished to preach Christ crucified.

Marinus and Anian, two Egyptians, came into Bavaria, and were very successful in the same cause. But the excessive austerity which they brought with them from the East must have been detrimental to their work. The former at length was murdered by robbers; the latter died a natural death. Elio, bishop of Noyon, carefully visited his large diocese, especially the pagan parts of it, and was very successful among the Flemings, the Antwerpers, and the Frisons. At first he found them fierce and exceedingly obstinate. But God was with him both in life and doctrine. Every Easter he baptized great numbers, who had been brought to the knowledge of God in the preceding year. Very aged persons, amidst crowds of children, came to be baptized, and there is the fairest evidence of his evangelical success.

This is all that I can find, with certainty, of the propagation of the Gospel in the seventh century in Germany and the neighbouring countries. The censures of Mosheim, as if the greatest part of the missionaries were not sincere, or as if many of the monks covered their ambition with the cloak of mortification, appear to me illiberal and unfounded,* and would have been more worthy of a modern sceptic. Superstition and an excessive attachment to the Roman See is very visible among them. But the little account of facts, which we have, bears testimony to their uprightness. Where is that charity which hopeth all things, if we are to

* Mosheim, [Cent. vii. p. 1. c. 1. s. 4.] I find no just reason to suspect any of them, except Wilfrid, bishop of York, mentioned in the last Chapter.

suppose men to be wrong, against all appearances? If ecclesiastical historians had delighted as much in recording good as they have in recording evil, it is probable a more ample refutation of the inconsiderate aspersions of this author might have been exhibited to the reader.

CHAP. III.

THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

PHOCAS, the Greek emperor, was deposed and put to death by Heraclius in the year 610. He was one of the most vicious and profligate tyrants, and may be compared with Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. Since the days of Constantine such characters had been exceeding rare. For such was the benign influence of the Gospel, that even amidst all the corruptions and abuses of it, which were now so numerous, a decency of character and conduct, unknown to their Pagan predecessors, was supported by the emperors in general. Heraclius, the successor of Phocas, reigned thirty years. In the beginning of his reign the Persians desolated the eastern part of the empire, and made themselves masters of Jerusalem. While Asia groaned under their cruelties and oppressions, and was afflicted with scourge after scourge, for her long abuse of the best gift of God, an opportunity was given for the exercise of Christian graces to a bishop of a Church, which had long ceased to produce Christian fruit.

Phocas put to death by Heraclius, A.D. 610.

This was John, bishop of Alexandria, called the Almoner, on account of his extensive liberality. He daily supplied with necessaries those who flocked into Egypt, after they had escaped the Persian arms. He sent to * Jerusalem the most ample relief for such as remained there: he ransomed captives; placed the sick and wounded in hospitals, and visited them, in person, two or three times a week. He even seems to have interpreted too strictly the sacred rule, "of giving to him that asketh of thee." His spirit however was noble;

Christian conduct of John the Almoner, bishop of Alexander.

* Fleury, b. xxxvii. [c. 11, and 12.]

"Should the whole world come to Alexandria," said he, "they could not exhaust the treasures of God."

The Nile not having risen to its usual height, there was a barren season; provisions were scarce, and crowds of refugees still poured into Alexandria. John continued, however, his liberal donatives, till he had neither money, nor credit. The prayer of faith was his resource, and he still persevered in hope. He even refused a very tempting offer of a person, who would have bribed him with a large present, that he might be ordained deacon. "As to my brethren the poor," said the holy prelate, "God, who fed them, before you and I were born, will take care to feed them now, if we obey him." Soon afterward he heard of the arrival of two large ships, which he had sent into Sicily for corn. "I thank thee, O Lord," cried the bishop, in a rapture of joy, "that thou hast kept me from selling thy gift for money."

From the beginning of his bishopric he supported 7,500 poor persons by daily alms. He was accessible to them on all occasions; and what is most material, divine faith seems to have influenced his acts of love. "If God," said he, "allow us to enter into his house at all times, and if we wish him speedily to hear us, how ought we to conduct ourselves toward our brethren?" He constantly studied the Scriptures, and, in his conversation, was instructive and exemplary. Slander and evil speaking he peculiarly disliked. If any person in his presence was guilty in this respect, he would give another turn to the discourse. If the person still persisted, he would direct his servant not to admit him any more.

The long course of heresy, licentiousness, and ambition, which had filled the Alexandrian Church, supported by the shameful examples of such pastors as Theophilus and other profligate men, must have reduced it to the lowest ebb; and I wonder not to find, that persons behaved indecently, even in public worship. John, one day seeing several leave the church after the reading of the Gospel, went out also, and sat down among them. "Children," said he, "the shepherd should be with his flock; I could pray at home, but I cannot preach at home." By doing this twice, he reformed the abuse. Let it be marked, as an evidence of the zeal of this prelate, who, like another Josiah, seems to have

been sent to reform a falling church, that the preaching of the word engaged much of his heart. The contempt of preaching is a certain token of extreme degeneracy.

A canon was made at Paris, in a council,* in the year 615, the same year in which Jerusalem was taken, which enjoins that HE shall be ordained to succeed a deceased bishop, who shall be chosen by the archbishop, together with the bishops of the province, the clergy and the people, without any prospect of gain: if the ordination be conducted otherwise through compulsion or neglect, the election shall be void. The intelligent reader will hence judge of the state of ecclesiastical polity at that time.

Remarkable Canon made in a Council at Paris, A.D. 615. [can. 1.] In the same year the Persians take Jerusalem.

In 616, John the Almoner departed from Alexandria, for fear of the Persians, and died soon after in Cyprus, in the same spirit in which he had lived; and with him ends all that is worth recording of the church of Alexandria.

Death of John about A.D. 616.

In the same year the haughty Chosroes, king of Persia, having conquered Alexandria and Egypt, and taken Chalcedon, Heraclius, who saw the ruin of his empire approaching, begged for peace. "That I will never consent to," replied the tyrant, "till you renounce him who was crucified, whom you call God, and with me adore the sun." If one compare Chosroes and Heraclius, their personal characters will not appear intrinsically different. In one is seen a daring blasphemer of Christ, in the other a mere nominal professor of Christianity, whose life brought neither honour nor credit to the Gospel. Their ostensible characters in the world were, however, extremely different. The Lord, who is a jealous God, has ever been used to confound his open enemies in the view of all mankind. Chosroes was a second Sennacherib, and he was treated as such by the Sovereign of the universe. The spirit of Heraclius was roused, and God gave him wonderful success: the Persian king was repeatedly vanquished, though he ceased not to persecute the Christians, so long as he had power; and after he had lost the greatest part of his dominions, he was murdered by his own son, as was the case with Sen-

* [Tom. v. Conc. p. 1649.]

nacherib, and in the year 628 the Persian power ceased to be formidable to the Roman empire.*

It is not without reason that St. Paul exhorts us "to shun profane and vain babblings; because their words will eat like a canker." † The Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, opposite extremes, the one dividing the person, the other confounding the two natures of Jesus Christ, though condemned by councils, still flourished in great vigour in the east. And the resistance of the orthodox had little effect, for want of the energy of true spiritual life, which still subsisted in a measure in the west. For there the sound doctrine of grace, the guard of true humility, was an ensign, around which truly pious men were wont to rally their strength from time to time. But, in Asia, and Egypt, religion was for the most part heartless speculation. And about the year 630 the Eutychian heresy produced another, the Monothelite, ‡ which ascribed only one will to Jesus Christ. This opinion was the natural consequence of that, which gave him only one nature. Theodore, bishop of Pharan in Arabia, first started this notion, which was also readily received by Sergius, bishop of Constantinople, whose parents had been Eutychians. Cyrus, who soon after was made bishop of Alexandria, supported the same heresy. The ambiguous subtilties of the party drew the emperor Heraclius into the same net, and the east was rapidly overspread with the heresy.

The Monothelite heresy, A.D. 630.

In a council at Alexandria, Sophronius, a man of sincerity and simplicity, and formerly the disciple of John the Almoner, with tears bewailed and protested against the innovation, but in vain. Having been elected bishop of Jerusalem in 629, he afterwards in 633 exerted his authority against the growing heresy, but with meekness of wisdom. In a synodical letter § he explained with equal solidity and accuracy the divine and human operations of Jesus Christ, and gave pertinent instances of both.‖

Sophronius opposes the heresy, A.D. 633.

"When he thought fit, he gave his human nature an opportunity to act or to suffer whatever belonged to it. His incarnation was no fancy, and he always acted volun-

* Fleury, b. xxxvii. 33. † 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17.
‡ Fleury, b. [xxxvii.] 41. § [Harduin. Concil. tom. 3. p. 1257.]
‖ Fleury, b. xxxviii. [6. Phot. Bibl. c. 231.]

tarily. Jesus Christ, as God, willingly took on himself human nature, and he willingly suffered in his flesh to save us, and, by his merits, to free us from suffering. His body was subject to our natural and innocent passions : he permitted it to suffer, according to its nature, till his resurrection ; then he freed himself from all that is corruptible in our nature, that he might deliver us from the same." Sophronius recommends himself to the prayers of Sergius, to whom he writes, and adds, " pray for our emperors," he means Heraclius and his son, " that God may give them victory over all the barbarians ; particularly, that he would humble the pride of the Saracens, who for our sins have suddenly risen upon us, and lay all waste with fierce barbarity and impious confidence."

Thus, in the lowest times of evangelical religion, God ever raised up men who understood the truth, and knew how to defend it by sound argument, a charitable spirit, and a holy life. This seems to have been the case of Sophronius. In the mean time the Monothelite heresy spread wider and wider. Even Honorius, bishop of Rome, was led into the snare, owned but one will in Jesus Christ, and imposed silence on all the controversialists. Heraclius himself, who lent his imperial authority to the support of a speculative phantom, while he imposed on his own heart by a specious show of theological nicety, lived in the gross and open wickedness of incest, by marrying his own niece.

The danger from the Saracens, mentioned by Sophronius, was no other than the victorious arms of Mahomet, the Arabian impostor. He had begun in the year 608 to declare himself a prophet, and, by the assistance of a Jew and a renegado Christian, had formed a farrago of doctrines and rites, in which there was a mixture of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, whence he found means to draw over to his party some of the various sorts of men who inhabited Arabia. An age of excessive ignorance favoured his schemes : at this day so senseless and absurd a book as the Koran could scarcely move the mind of any person in Europe. But he laid hold of the corrupt passions of man, and by indulging his followers in sensuality, ambition, and the love of booty, and by promising them a carnal heaven hereafter, he contrived a religion more di-

Mahomet, A.D. 608.

rectly adapted to please mankind than any other of which we have heard. At the same time by declaring war against all who did not receive him, he gave an undoubted right to all nations to attack a system which could only thrive by the oppression of others. But there are seasons of infatuation, when, for the sins of men, empires and kingdoms are permitted to slumber, and no effectual measures of resistance are embraced, till invaders, at first weak and contemptible, grow in time to an enormous height. This was the case with Mahometanism. The time was come when the Saracen locusts were about to torment the Christian world, and the prophecy of Rev. ix. (1—12) was going to be fulfilled. The Greeks were idly employed in the new dispute: vice and wickedness prevailed over the East in all forms. A few indeed mourned over the times, and adorned the truth by humility and holiness, but scarcely any Christian writers appeared to make a serious opposition to the doctrines of Mahomet, and at the time of his death, which happened in the year 631, he had conquered almost all Arabia.*

Death of Mahomet. A. D. 631.

Notwithstanding the decease of the impostor, the Mahometan arms proceeded still with the same rapidity. Damascus fell into the hands of his successors; and Sophronius exhorted his flock to take warning and repent. Jerusalem however was taken by the enemy in the year 637, and Sophronius died soon after. Antioch and Alexandria successively sunk under them. Persia itself was subdued. Thus did God

Jerusalem taken by the Saracens, A.D. 637.

* It has pleased God to permit the existence of this odious and contemptible religion to this day. And it should be carefully observed that Mahomet, wicked and deceitful as he doubtless was altogether, did not openly oppose God or his Christ. He did not deny directly, though he did consequentially, the divine revelation either of the Old or New Testament. He always spake respectfully of the inspired prophetical character of Moses and of Christ. He received so much of Christianity as agrees with Socinianism. Jehovah was not therefore openly despised by him, as he was by Julian, Chosroes, and Sennacherib. On them was fulfilled that Scripture, "he repayeth them that hate him, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." Deut. vii. 10. A speedy destruction of such avowed enemies seems to be menaced, that the Divine character may be vindicated. His covert enemies, who yet treat him with respectful decorum, are often permitted long to exist, for the punishment of false professors. For the truth and majesty of God are not so sensibly dishonoured by them in the view of the whole world, as to call for their immediate extirpation.

equally punish the persecuting idolaters, and the vicious professors of Christianity in the east. They were doomed to a long night of servitude under Mahometanism, which continues to this time. Heraclius himself died in the year 641. God had showed him great mercies, and given him very great encouragement to seek true religion, by the remarkable success of his arms against the Persians in the middle of his reign. But he lived wickedly and speculated unscripturally. And a new power was erected, which reaped the fruits of all his Persian triumphs, and tore from him the fairest provinces of the east.

Death of Heraclius, A.D. 641.

To what purpose should I run through the mazes of the Monothelite controversy? yet something must be said on the part which Maximus acted in it. He was one of the most learned men of the age, and had been employed by Heraclius as his secretary; but I wonder not that a man, who loved real godliness, as he did, should have a strong aversion to a court like that of Heraclius. He entered into the monastery of Chrysopolis near Chalcedon, and was at length elected abbot. He it was, who succeeded Sophronius in the defence of the primitive faith, and with much labour confuted the heresiarchs. Martin, bishop of Rome, was excited by the zeal of Maximus to assemble a council, in the Lateran, of a hundred and five bishops, in 649.* Constans was at this time emperor, and, by a decree, had forbidden any side at all to be taken in the controversy. Sergius, Pyrrhus, and Paul, three successive bishops of Constantinople, had supported the heresy. The controversy had now lasted eighteen years. In this way the active minds of men, destitute of the truth, but eagerly embracing the form of godliness, gratified the self-righteous bias of the heart, and all the malevolent passions in long-protracted controversies, while practical religion was lost. Nor could all the calamities of the times, and the desolation of the eastern churches, move them to the love of peace and truth.

Council in the Lateran, A.D. 649.

In these circumstances, Martin in council ventured to anathematize the supporters of the Monothelite heresy. I cannot blame his disobedience to the emperor Constans in

* [Tom. vi. Conc. p. 75.]

refusing to observe silence on a point of doctrine which appeared to him important. Constans evidently forgot his office when he required such things. And it is a curious instance of the power of prejudice in some Protestant historians,* that they will so much support the conduct of a worthless tyrant as Constans doubtless was, because his speculative principles induced him to treat a Roman bishop with cruelty. There was a haughtiness, no doubt, and an asperity in the language and behaviour of Martin, very unbecoming a Christian. His cause however seems just; nor does it appear that he either meant or acted treasonably: he defended that part of the truth which was opposed, with the magnanimity, though not with the meekness, that became a bishop. Constans ordered him to be dragged into the east, and treated him with a long-protracted barbarity of punishment. Martin was firm to the last.† "As to this wretched body," says he, "the Lord will take care of it. He is at hand; why should I give myself any trouble? for I hope in his mercy, that he will not prolong my course." He died in the year 655. His extreme sufferings of imprisonment, hunger, fetters, brutal treatment a thousand ways, call for compassion: his constancy demands respect; and his firm adherence to the doctrines of truth, though mixed with a very blameable ambition in maintaining the dignity of the Roman See, deserves the admiration of Christians. He is, in Romish language, called St. Martin; and I hope he had a just title to the name in the best sense of the word.

Martin bishop of Rome, cruelly treated by Constans the IId: —dies in prison, A. D. 655.

Maximus was also brought to Constantinople, and, by the order of Constans, underwent a number of examinations. He was asked by an officer to sign the type;—so the edict of Constans was named. "Only do this," said the officer, "believe what you please in your heart." "It is not to the heart alone," replied Maximus, "that God hath confined our duty; we are also obliged with the mouth to confess Jesus Christ before men."‡ It is astonishing§ to observe what pains were taken to engage him to own the

* See Bower Vol. iii. and Mosheim. [Cent. vii. Pars. 2. c. 5. s. 8.]
† [Fleury, l. xxxix. c. 9.]
‡ See Butler, Vol. xii. [Dec. 30.] § Fleury, b. xxxix. c. 14. &c.

Monothelite party, nor can this be accounted for in any other way than by the opinion which all men had of his piety and sincerity, and the expectation of the influence which his example would have on many. But the labour was lost: Maximus, though seventy-five years old, preserved all the vigour of understanding, and confounded his examiners by the solidity of his answers. He clearly proved, "that to allow only one will or operation in Jesus Christ, was in reality to allow only one nature: that therefore the opinion for which the emperor was so zealous, was nothing more than Eutychianism dressed up anew: that he had not so properly condemned the emperor, as the doctrine, by whomsoever it was held: that it was contrary to the current of all ecclesiastical antiquity: that our Saviour was always allowed from the apostolical times to be perfect God and perfect man, and must therefore have the nature, will, and operations distinctly belonging both to God and man: that the new notion went to confound the idea both of the Divinity and the humanity, and to leave him no proper existence at all: that the emperor was not a pastor, and that it had never been practised by Christian emperors, in the best times, to impose silence on bishops: that it was their duty not to disguise the truth by ambiguous expressions, but to defend it by clear and distinct terms adapted to the subject: that Arianism had always endeavoured to support itself by such artifices as those employed by the emperor, and that a peace obtained by such methods in the Church was at the expense of truth." I admire the good sense and sincerity, which appear through the very long account of his defence, of which I have given a very brief summary. Were it not, that God from age to age had raised up such champions in his Church, humanly speaking, not an atom of Christian truth by this time would have been left in the world. For heretics have uniformly acted on this plan; viz., under the pretence of the love of peace and union, they have imposed silence on the orthodox, whenever they had the power; and in the mean time propagated their own tenets. The question before us was very metaphysical and obscure; yet, if the emperor's side had prevailed, instead of an insignificant party, called the Maronites, in the east, who still

subsist, the Monothelites might have filled half the globe to this day.

The tyrant, enraged to find himself disappointed, ordered Maximus to be scourged, his tongue to be cut out, his right hand to be cut off; and then directed the maimed abbot to be banished, and doomed to imprisonment for the rest of his life. The same punishment was inflicted on two of his disciples, both of the name of Anastasius. These three upright men were separated from each other, and confined in three castles in obscure regions of the east. Their condemnation took place in 656: Maximus died in 662: one of the Anastasiuses in 664: they both had sustained the most cruel indignities, and had been rendered incapable of any consolations, except those which undoubtedly belong to men who suffer for righteousness' sake. The other Anastasius died in a castle at the foot of Mount Caucasus in 666.

Barbarous persecutions by Constans II. A. D. 656.

While such barbarous measures were used by nominal Christians to support unscriptural tenets, it is not to be wondered at that Providence frowned on the affairs of the empire. The Saracens now ruled over Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and part of Africa. Even Europe suffered from the depredations of the Arabians, and part of Sicily was reduced to their subjection.

The unworthy emperor Constans murdered also his own brother Theodosius, and continued to disgrace the Christian name by his follies, his vices, and his cruelties. He was himself dispatched at length in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, in 668.

Constans murders his brother Theodosius. Is himself murdered, A.D. 668.

In the year 680 a general council was called at Constantinople: the emperor Constantine Pogonatus presided: the Monothelite heresy was anathematized; and its several abettors were condemned, among whom was Honorius a bishop of Rome. A certain proof that infallibility was neither allowed nor pretended to at that time by the Italian prelate. For the legates of Agathon, who was then bishop of Rome, were at the council, nor do we find that any opposition was made by

Council of Constantinople, A. D. 680.

them or by their master to the condemnation of Honorius.*

If we compare the East and the West, during this century, we shall see a very striking difference. In England true godliness shone for a considerable part of it: in France there was a good measure of piety; and from these two countries divine truth made its way into Germany and the north with glorious success. In Italy, the Lombards were more and more cleared of Arianism; and though there arose no bishop of Rome to be compared at all to Gregory, yet, in point of theological speculation, the purity of the faith was preserved by them all, except one. And his condemnation, which we have just seen, demonstrates that Antichrist had not yet arrived at maturity. Infallibility was not then thought of, as attached to the person of the Roman prelate. His power indeed was much too great; so was his pomp and influence. But it was the same with the bishops of other great Sees: and the bishop of Constantinople retains the title of Universal Bishop to this day. Nor had the bishop of Rome any temporal dominion, nor did he pretend to any. In fine, the most decisive marks of Antichrist, idolatry and false doctrine, had not yet appeared at Rome. Superstition and vice were lamentably on the increase in the West, though a considerable degree of true piety prevailed, and some gracious effusions of the Spirit of God appeared.

In the East, the influences of divine grace seem to have been withheld entirely. Men had there filled up the measure of their iniquities. Even from Origen's days a decline of true doctrine, and the spirit of sceptical philosophy, ever hostile to that of grace, kept them low in religion compared with their western brethren. How precious must the grace of the Gospel be, which, being revived in Europe, in the time of Augustine, ceased not to produce salutary effects, and to extend true religion even to the most savage nations! Attempts indeed to propagate, what they call Christianity, were made in the East by the Nestorians, who dwelt in Persia and India, and by the Eutychians, who flourished in Egypt. The former were particularly successful in in-

* This was the VIth. general council held in the 13th year of Constantine V. surnamed Pogonatus, and the 3rd year of Agathon. [Tom. vi. Conc. p. 587.]

creasing their numbers; but I have nothing to produce of real godliness as the result of the labours of either party. Abyssinia, which from the days of Athanasius, always considered herself as a daughter of Alexandria, receives thence her pontiff to this day: when Eutychianism prevailed in Egypt, it did so of course in Abyssinia, and has been the prevalent form in both countries, ever since the seventh century. The Mahometan conquerors reduced the ancient professors of orthodoxy into a state of extreme insignificancy; and this was one of the scourges of God by the Arabian imposture, namely, that while the orthodox were crushed, heretics were encouraged and protected by those conquerors. Orthodox patriarchs existed indeed in Egypt for some time after the Saracen conquest: but ignorance, superstition, and immorality, still abounded, and have now continued to abound for many centuries. The East, whence the light first arose, has long sat in darkness, with the exception of some individuals from age to age, such as John the Almoner, and a few others, who have been mentioned in this chapter. God will have a Church upon earth, and it shall be carried to the most despised regions, rather than extinguished entirely. In these works of his providence there is a significant voice which speaks to Europe in an awful tone.

Africa fell under the power of the Mahometans toward the close of this century. It had long shared in the general corruption, and it shared in the general punishment. The region which has so often refreshed us with Evangelical light and energy, where Cyprian suffered, and where Augustine taught, was consigned to Mahometan darkness, and must henceforth be very nearly dismissed from these memoirs.

CHAP. IV.

AUTHORS OF THIS CENTURY.*

ISIDORE,† of Seville, flourished in the former part of it: he governed the church of Seville for forty years, having succeeded his brother Leander, of whom we have made

* Du Pin, Cent. vii.

† [Ildefon. Tol. de Script. Eccl. c. 9. Sig. Gemb. c. 55. Hon. iii. c. 40. J. Trithem. c. 232.]

honourable mention already. This writer was voluminous, and, with all due allowance for the superstition of the age, appears to have been sincerely pious. But perhaps the most useful part of his works is his collection of sentences out of Gregory. He seems to have been providentially given to Spain, in order to preserve some of the ancient learning, and to prevent men from sinking into total ignorance and rusticity.

Columban * must be mentioned also as an author, though we have already celebrated him in the character in which he shone far more, namely, of a missionary. He was, no doubt, pious and fervent: he wrote monastic rules, and while every part of his writings is infected with the servile genius of the times, and the spirit of bondage, which had seized the Church, one sentence retrieves his character, and with it I shall dismiss him; "We must have recourse to Christ the fountain of life." Sophronius of Jerusalem wrote a synodal letter to confute the [R. 13.] Monothelites. His part in that controversy has been stated already. He asserted, that we shall rise with the same body, and that the punishments of hell are eternal. The most remarkable thing in him is the soundness of his doctrine, which he adorned with genuine piety and purity of life.

Martin,† bishop of Rome, whose sufferings from the tyrant Constans have been succinctly described, was one of the greatest men of the age. Some of his letters are extant, and they indicate both strength of mind, and zeal in religion. Amandus, bishop of Utrecht, in writing to him, declared that he was so grieved to find some clergymen to have lived lasciviously after their ordination, that he was tempted to quit his bishopric. Martin dissuaded him; and at the same time exhorted him to exercise salutary discipline on the offenders, declaring, that such clergymen should be deposed entirely from the sacerdotal function, that they may repent in a private condition, and may find mercy at the last day. He exhorts Amandus to undergo patiently all trials for the salvation of the sheep, and the service of God. This Roman prelate doubtless was sincere, and he appears to have defended evangelical truth

* [Sig. Gemb. c. 60. Anon. Millicens. c. 25. Trithem. c. 223.]
† [Aub. Miræ. Auct. c. 189.]

with much firmness. And it was for a branch of scriptural doctrine that he suffered with consistency and integrity.

I mention Maximus, his fellow-sufferer in the same cause. His writings * are too scholastical to merit much attention, though he was, doubtless, a very able reasoner, and, what is infinitely better, a pious and upright man.

I might swell the list, with the names of writers little known, and of little use. Learning was very low: the taste of the age was barbarous: we have seen, however, that Christ had then a Church; and the reader, if he pleases, may travel through still darker scenes; yet I trust some glimmerings of the presence of Christ will appear.

CENTURY VIII.

CHAP. I.

VENERABLE BEDE, THE ENGLISH PRESBYTER.

THE Church-history of our Country, written by this renowned father, was continued to the year 731. I have extracted from it that which suited my purpose. He is said to have died in 735. Of his age the accounts are very contradictory. The history of the VIIIth century will properly begin with a brief narrative of the life and works of this Historian.

Bede died, A.D. 735.

He was born near Durham, in a village now called Farrow,† near the mouth of the Tyne. Losing both his parents at the age of seven years, he was, by the care of relations, placed in the monastery of Weremouth, was there educated with much strictness, and appears from his youth to have been devoted to the service of God. He was afterwards removed to the neighbouring monastery of Jerrow, where he ended his days. He was looked on as the most learned man of his time. Prayer, writing, and teaching, were his familiar employments during his whole life.‡ He was ordained deacon in the nine-

Born, A.D. 672.

* [Phot. c. 192—5. Aubert. Miræi Auct. c. 190.] † [Or rather Jarrow.]
‡ Life of Bede, prefixed to his Works. Cologne edition.

teenth, and presbyter in the thirtieth, year of his age. He gave himself wholly to the study of the Scriptures, the instruction of disciples, the offices of public worship, and the composition of religious and literary works. The life of such a person can admit of little variety. It was not, however, for want of opportunity that he lived thus obscure. His character was celebrated through the Western world: the bishop of Rome invited him warmly to the metropolis of the Church; but in the eyes of Bede, the great world had no charms. It does not appear that he ever left England; and, however infected with the fashionable devotion to the Roman See, he was evidently sincere and disinterested.

Constantly engaged in reading or writing, he made all his studies subservient to devotion. As he was sensible, that it is by the grace of God, rather than by natural faculties, that the most profitable knowledge of the Scriptures is acquired, he mixed prayer with his studies. He never knew what it was to do nothing. He wrote on all the branches of knowledge then cultivated in Europe. In Greek and Hebrew he had a skill very uncommon in that barbarous age; and, by his instructions and example, he raised up many scholars. Knowledge indeed in those times was more familiar in the British isles than in any part of Europe.

The catalogue of Bede's works exhibits the proofs of his amazing industry. His Church-history is to us the most valuable, because it is the only British monument of the Church which we have for the seventh century. His expositions and homilies, however, must in that dearth of knowledge have been abundantly useful. The ignorance of the times is indeed but too visible in him; and he followed Augustine and other fathers so closely, and collected so much from various authors, that his want of original genius is more than problematical. Genuine godliness, rather than taste and genius, appear on the face of his writings. His labours in the sciences show a love of learning; however inconsiderable his acquisitions must appear, in comparison with the attainments of the present age.

In his last sickness he was afflicted for two weeks with a difficulty of breathing.* His mind was, however, serene and cheerful, his affections were heavenly; and amidst these

* [Cuthbert's letter on the death of Bede.]

infirmities he daily taught his disciples. A great part of the night was employed in prayer and thanksgiving; and the first employment of the morning was to ruminate on the Scriptures, and to address his God in prayer. "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," was frequently in his mouth.

Even amidst his bodily weakness he was employed in writing two little treatises. Perceiving his end to draw near, he said, ["It is time that I return to him who formed me out of nothing, I have lived long; well hath my merciful judge foreseen for me my life—the time of my dissolution draws nigh, for I desire to die and to be with Christ."] He sang glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and expired with a sedateness, composure, and devotion, which surprised all who were present at this scene.

Account of the death of Bede.

This is the account of his death by one of his disciples; and a very few quotations from his expository writings will show on what solid grounds these religious affections were founded. In expounding Acts ii. 28, "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance;" he says, "These things are not only to be understood of our Lord, who needed no other guide to overcome the kingdom of death, but having received at once the fulness of divine strength and wisdom, was able to conquer death by himself, rise again to life, and ascend to his Father, but also of his elect, who, by his gift, find the [way of truth,] by which they rise to the bliss which they lost in Adam, and shall be filled with heavenly joy. This shall be our perfect bliss, when we shall see him face to face. Philip knew this well, when he said, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' That pleasure of seeing the face of God sufficeth: there shall be nothing more; nor is there a call for any thing more, when he is seen who is above all." *

"Other innumerable methods of saving men being set aside, this was selected by Infinite Wisdom, namely, that without any diminution of his divinity, he assumed also humanity; and in humanity procured so much good to

* Retractat. on Acts of the Apostles. I cannot prevail on myself to omit this passage, though the expression of Philip be not so pertinent to the purpose of the author, as some other portions of Scripture might have been.

men, that temporal death, though not due from him, was yet paid, to deliver them from eternal death, which was due from them. Such was the efficacy of that blood, that the devil, who slew Christ by a temporary death which was not due, cannot detain in eternal death any of those who are clothed with Christ, though that eternal death be due for their sins."*

Such were the Evangelical views, which, in a night of superstition, burst forth from the northern extremity of England. But the doctrines revived by Augustine flourished still in Europe in a good degree, though in no part more than in the British isles. Indeed monastic superstition grew among our fathers at the same time excessively, and, in the end, entirely corrupted the doctrines. But that was not yet the case: superstition itself, though deplorably childish and absurd, was not incompatible with sincerity and the fear of God. The real nature of the Gospel, and its practical exercise in faith, humility, and true mortification of sin, were understood and felt by the Saxon presbyter, whose comments on St. Paul's epistles are, in depth of understanding and penetration into the sacred sense, even with all the defects of the times, greatly superior to several admired expositions of this, which calls itself an enlightened age.

The seventh chapter to the Romans may deservedly be called a touchstone of spiritual understanding. Too many modern divines, by supposing that the Apostle is only describing the conflict between reason and passion, after the manner of the ancient philosophers, have demonstrated their own total ignorance of St. Paul's argument. He only, who feels, abhors, and sincerely struggles with indwelling sin, who is conscious of its unutterable malignity, and is humbled under this conviction, can understand the Apostle aright, and prize the real grace of God in Jesus Christ. Such was Bede: the very best expositors in the most evangelical times do not much exceed him, in clearness and solidity, in the exposition of this chapter. I will not delay the reader by quoting largely from his explica-

* On Rom. v. [The commentary on St. Paul's Epistles, printed in the folio editions of Bede's works is supposed not to be a work of Bede's, it has by some been ascribed to Florus, by others to Bartholemæus Urbinas, and likewise to Petrus Abbas Tripolitanus.]

tion. Suffice it to give a hint or two. He observes, from the Apostle, that the desire of sinning itself is increased by the prohibitions of the law, which therefore increases sin, without giving any strength; and the purport of this part of the divine economy is, that men groaning under the law might come to the Mediator. He strongly contends, that the wretched carnal person, sold under sin, in this chapter, was no personated character, but Paul himself, and he confirms this by observing, from the epistle to the Philippians, that the Apostle confessed "he was not perfect, and had not attained unto the resurrection of the dead;" and from another epistle, that he was even buffeted by Satan, and had a thorn in his flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure. This inward warfare, our author contends, must last through life. "In the resurrection, every thing," says he, "shall he perfected. In the mean time it is a great thing to keep the field, and remain unconquered, though not discharged from war."

But though he fully reached the scope of Augustine, from whose labours he profited abundantly, he seems never to go beyond it. Indeed his expositions are extracts and compilations from the fathers, chiefly from Augustine. In this sense they were his own, that he understood and experienced their truth and efficacy. But judgment and industry, not genius and invention, were the talents of this writer. Though the thought I am going to mention is most probably not his own, yet it gives so instructive a view of the state of all mankind, ranked in four classes, that I cannot prevail on myself to withhold it from the reader. Speaking of the conflict with indwelling sin, described in Rom. vii. he observes, "that there are those who fight not at all, and are drawn away by their lusts; others who fight indeed, but are overcome, because they fight without faith, and in their own strength; others who fight, and are still in the field, not overcome, which was the case with St. Paul and all true Christians in this world; and lastly, others who have overcome, and are at rest above." Bede like Augustine, allegorizes to excess, and is very often desultory and vague in his comments: his views of Solomon's Song are solid, though in the explication too minute: still more faulty perhaps are his expositions on the tabernacle and

on Solomon's temple. His homilies, at the time, must have been very edifying, notwithstanding the puerile fancies with which they are discoloured. On the whole I shall venture to observe, what, however, no reader will be prepared to receive, unless his mind has been seasoned with a degree of experimental religion, that the comments of Bede are far more solid and judicious than those of many modern, improperly called rational, divines; though in the former the errors of fanciful allegory may abound, and in the latter there may every where appear an air of strict and accurate argumentation. The reason is, because the former, being possessed of the true meaning of the Apostle on the whole, supports and illustrates it throughout, though he fails in detached passages, because of the desultory ebullitions of a vicious taste, which predominated in his time; the latter with "semblance of worth, not substance," are accurate and just in many particulars, but from their system of notions, which is extremely opposite to that of St. Paul, mislead their readers altogether, in regard to the main drift of the argument.

A year before our presbyter's death, he wrote a letter to Egbert, archbishop of York, which deserves to be immortalized, for the solid sense which it exhibits, a quality with which Bede was very eminently endowed.*

† "Above all things," says he, "avoid useless discourse, and apply yourself to the Holy Scriptures, especially the epistles to Timothy and Titus; to Gregory's pastoral care, and his homilies on the Gospel. It is indecent for him, who is dedicated to the service of the Church, to give way to actions or discourse unsuitable to his character. Have always those about you who may assist you in temptation: be not like some bishops, who delight to have those about them who love good cheer, and divert them with trifling and facetious conversation.

"Your diocese is too large to allow you to go through the whole in one year; therefore appoint presbyters, in each village, to instruct and administer the sacraments; and let them be studious, that every one of them may learn,

* Bede's Works, Paris edit. p. 46. [or Giles, vol. i. p. 108.]

† [The general sense is given here with sufficient accuracy, though it is not a close translation.]

by heart, the Creed and the Lord's prayer; and that if they do not understand Latin, they may repeat them in their own tongue. I have translated them into English for the benefit of ignorant presbyters. I am told, that there are many villages in our nation, in the mountainous parts, the inhabitants of which have never seen a bishop or a pastor; and yet they are obliged to pay their dues to the bishop—

"The best means to reform our Church, is to increase the number of bishops. Who sees not, how much more reasonable it is for numbers to share this burden? Gregory therefore directed Augustine to appoint twelve bishops to be under the archbishop of York as their metropolitan. I wish you would fill up this number with the assistance of the king of Northumberland.*

"I know it is not easy to find an empty place for the erection of a bishopric. You may choose some monastery for the purpose. In truth, there are many places which have the name of monasteries without deserving it." He goes on to show how, for thirty years past, the scandalous abuse of monasteries had prevailed, and how useless many of them were to church and state, as they preserved neither piety nor decency. He directs Egbert to see that his flock be instructed in Christian faith and practice, and that they frequently attend the communion. He finds fault with the excessive multiplication of monks, and expresses his fears, lest, in process of time, the state should be destitute of soldiers to repel an invasion. This last observation is of a piece with another at the close of his history,† that many Northumbrians in his days, both nobles and private men, employed themselves and their children more in monastic vows than in the exercise of arms. "What effect this will have," says he, "the next generation will bear witness." It is no common instance of judgment in one who had always been a monk, to notice these evils.‡ How they happened to be so very fashionable in our island, it is not hard to explain. Our ancestors were, doubtless, much in-

* His name was Ceolwulph. Two years after Bede's death, he gave up his crown, and lived twenty-two years in a monastery. His mind was most probably truly devout, though the spirit of the times led him into a degenerate method of showing it.

† [B. v. c. 23.]

‡ Even kings gave themselves up to retirements of this kind; and there want not instances, among the Saxon princes, of pilgrimages to Rome of a religious nature.

debted under God to the Roman See. Christianity, before the missions of Gregory, was very low in England. A real spirit of godliness, the sincere practice and true understanding of the Gospel, had been, through the bishops of Rome, introduced among barbarians. Even the benefits thence resulting to society must have been great. Gratitude and affection would naturally lead our ancestors, in those superstitious ages, to monastic excesses. And if the evils of which Bede complains, be strong proofs of the superstitious taste, they are proofs also of the spirit of piety which subsisted among them. While Bede lived, in no part of the world was godliness better understood and practised than among our ancestors. In a synod held by Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, about the middle of this century, at Cloves-hoo,* there were twelve prelates, with Ethelbald, king of the Mercians. The canons A.D. 747. of this synod would have done honour to the purest times, and they seem to have been inspired by the genius of Bede. The clergy are directed to have fellowship with one another, to serve God in one spirit of faith, hope, and charity, to pray for one another, to attend to the duties of the Sabbath, and, in fine, the same things are repeated, which are to be found in Bede's letter to Egbert.

Let us not pride ourselves in a fancied superiority to our fore-fathers: a vanity of this sort seems to be the disease of the present age;—but men were not all without understanding in those dark seasons.—The indiscriminating censures of Mosheim on whole centuries, seem to show more contempt and ill-humour than discernment. Bede alone knew more of true religion, both doctrinal and practical, than numbers of ecclesiastics put together at this day; which will clearly appear, if we do but free him from superstitious rubbish, and examine what he is internally.

CHAP. II.

MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS.

A LITTLE after the beginning of this century, Lambert,† bishop of Maestricht, was murdered.—He had succeeded

* Now Cliffe near Rochester. Warner. [b. iii. Cent viii. p. 149.]

† [Vit. S. Lambert. in Canisii Lect. Antiq. tom. ii. part 1.]

Theodard, under whom he had been educated, and for forty years, had adorned the Gospel by a life of piety and charity. He had been seven years deprived of his See, amidst the civil confusions of France, but had been re-established about the year 681. This prelate had exerted himself with much zeal in his diocese, and laboured with success in the conversion of the Pagans, who were in his neighbourhood. His patience, as well as his doctrine, had a salutary effect. It is not, however, in the power of the wisest and best of men to restrain the tempers of their friends and relations. Two brothers, Gallus and Riold, were intolerably violent in plundering the Church of Maestricht, and infesting the neighbourhood. Lambert's relations, particularly two nephews, returned evil for evil, and slew them, much against the will of the bishop. Doubtless, the brothers ought to have applied to the civil magistrate, though justice was at that time very ill administered in France. Dodo, a powerful baron of the neighbourhood, a relation of the robbers, was determined to revenge their deaths upon the bishop himself; and he attacked him with armed men at Leodium * upon the Meuse. Lambert, in his first agitation upon the news of their approach, seized a sword, but recollecting himself, and lifting up his heart to God in prayer, he laid aside the sword, and composed himself to suffer. Two of his nephews began to make resistance. "If you love me truly," said Lambert, "love Jesus Christ also, and confess your sins to him. As for me, it is time for me to go to live with him." "Do you not hear," said another nephew, "how they call out to set fire to the house, to burn us all alive?" Remember, replied the bishop calmly, the guilt of the murder is yours: submit, and receive the due recompense of your deeds. He continued in fervent prayer, and the armed men put to the sword all whom they found, and among the rest, Lambert himself. A man of a Christian spirit surely, and worthy of a more enlightened age, in which his humility, piety, and charity might have shone with a brighter lustre!

Lambert restored, A.D. 681.

Ceolfred,† in the early part of this century, governed the two monasteries of Weremouth, and Jerrow, which had educated Bede. Through his influence, the Picts, who in-

* Now Liege. Fleury, xli. 16.

† [Bede v. c. 21.]

habited North Britain, were brought over to the Roman mode of celebrating Easter, and of course to the Roman communion.* But I can find no account of any progress in piety in the British isles. As the Roman church itself grew more corrupt in this century, our ancestors were infected with a larger portion of its superstitions.

In the year 713, the Mahometans passed over from Africa into Spain, and put an end to the kingdom of the Goths, which had lasted near three hundred years. The Christians were there reduced to slavery; and thus were scourged those wicked professors of religion, who had long held the truth in unrighteousness, called on the name of Christ, while in works they denied him, and buried his faith under an enormous heap of superstitions. A remnant, however, preserved their independency in the Asturian mountains, who chose Pelagius, a person descended from the royal family, for their king. He expressed his hope, that after God had chastised them for their sins, he would not give them up wholly to the Mahometans. His confidence in God was not disappointed. Under circumstances extremely disadvantageous, he defeated the enemy, repeopled the cities, rebuilt the churches, and, by the pious assistance of several pastors, supported the Gospel in one district of Spain, while the greatest part of the country was overrun by the Arabians. But the successors of Pelagius, by degrees, recovered more cities from the enemy. A.D. 713.

Christendom at this time presented a very grievous and mournful spectacle. Idolatry itself was now spreading widely, both in Europe and in Asia, among the professors of the Gospel:† men had very commonly every where forsaken the faith and the precepts of Jesus, in all those countries which had been long evangelized. The people, who served the Lord in the greatest purity and sincerity, seem to have been OUR ancestors,‡ and the inhabitants of some

* Egbert, an Englishman, not long after, effected the same change among many of the Irish. [Bede v. c. 22.]

† This important event will be explained in the next chapter.

‡ Ireland, which Prideaux calls the prime seat of learning in all Christendom, during the reign of Charlemagne, was peculiarly distinguished in this century. Usher has proved the name of Scotia to have been appropriated to Ireland at this time. Eginhard, the Secretary of Charlemagne, calls Ireland Hibernia Scotorum insula. Several of these Scots (Irish) laboured in the vineyard in Charlemagne's time, and were made bishops in

other regions, which had but lately received the Gospel. So true is the observation, which our history constantly gives us occasion to make, namely, that there is a perpetual tendency in human nature to degeneracy and corruption. Such, however, was the goodness of God, that he still exercised much long suffering amidst the most provoking enormities; and after he had removed the candlestick from some churches, he carried it to other places,* so that the light of his Gospel was never removed from the earth. The most marvellous event in such cases is, that men seem not at all conscious of their crimes, nor perceive the avenging hand of God upon them. For the nominal Christians of the day were insensible of their condition; and, though the Arabians were evidently making large strides toward universal dominion, it was not till they had advanced into the heart of France, and ravaged that country in a dreadful manner, that any strong efforts were made to withstand them. In the 732, however, they were totally defeated near Poictiers, by the heroic Charles Martel. An event memorable in history, because by it the providence of God stopped the progress of the Arabian locusts. It is astonishing, that all the civilized nations had not long ago united in a league, which would have been equally just and prudent, to stem the torrent which threatened the desolation of mankind. Those who had, for ages, trusted more in relics, altars, austerities, pilgrimages, than in Christ crucified, and had lived in deceit, avarice, and uncleanness, were suffered to yield themselves a prey to devouring invaders.—Adored be that Providence, which, in the crisis, preserved Europe from complete desolation, and, by saving France from those barbarians, has still left a people to serve God in these western regions.†

Saracens defeated by C. Martel, A.D. 732.

Germany. Both sacred and profane learning were taught by them with success. * This will be illustrated in Chap. iv.

† The plague of the locusts, Rev. ix. continued five months, that is, 150 years, a day being reckoned for a year in prophetical language. It may be difficult to reckon exactly the time of the extension of the Arabian conquests, because of the inaccuracy and confusion of historians. But divine truth was exact, no doubt; and under every possible way of computation, the period of about 150 years will properly limit the duration of the Saracen conquests.

CHAP. III.

THE CONTROVERSY ON IMAGES. THE MATURITY OF ANTICHRIST.

ABOUT the year 727, the Greek emperor began open hostility with the bishop of Rome, and, to use the words of Sigonius,* Rome and the Roman dukedom passed from the Greek to the Roman bishop. It would have been more accurate to say, that a foundation was then laid for the temporal power of that prelate, than that it was actually established. However, as it was established a few years after, and a rupture commenced at the period just mentioned, I shall assume this as the most proper date that I know of, for the beginning of popedom, which from this time is to be regarded as Antichrist indeed: for it set itself by temporal power to support false doctrine, and particularly that, which deserves the name of idolatry.

Beginning of the Popedom.

The marvellous propensity of all ages to the sin of idolatry, which implies a departure of the heart from the one living and true God, must originate in some steady principles existing in the nature of fallen man. The true account of this extraordinary and lamentable fact seems to be as follows:—God is an immaterial, self-existent Being, of infinite power and goodness, and, as our Maker and Preserver, He has an unquestionable claim to our supreme veneration and affection. Man, considered as a rational creature, is endowed with faculties abundantly sufficient for the discovery of this great and perfect Being, so far as his own duties and interests are concerned. This has frequently been proved, by able moralists, in the way of argument, and is expressly affirmed to be the case by St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where it is said, that "that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;—so that they are without excuse."

* Sigon. Hist. de Regn. Italie, b. iii.

In fact, however, fallen man has never, by the mere use of his reason, found out God to any good purpose, and worshipped him accordingly; and even when God by special revelation has condescended to explain and manifest his true character to a particular people, few of that people have served him as they ought to have done for any great length of time; but they soon corrupted the divine religion, and were plunged in idolatry.

The Jehovah of the sacred writings, and the Almighty and all-perfect God, who may be discovered by sound reason, is an invisible Being, and is to be honoured, as a Spirit, with the heart, and the understanding, and without the intervention of sensible objects, as stocks or stones. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." But the history of our corrupted nature shows, that images and other sensible objects have, in all ages, offered themselves to men's minds as guides and helps to a conception of the Deity; and if, in some instances, these absurd inventions of gross idolatry have been rejected by men of learning and refinement, it has then generally happened, that intellectual figments of philosophical vanity have been substituted in their place, figments still more atheistical in their nature, and farther removed from the notion of a wise and authoritative Governor of the Universe, who enjoins the submission and dependence of his creatures, requires their obedience, and dispenses justice impartially.

The principles, which appear to account for this apostasy and opposition to the divine Will, may be comprehended under the terms pride, self-love, self-righteousness, and desire of independence; or, indeed, under the single term pride alone, if we use that expression according to its most extensive application. Fallen man is too proud, practically to feel and confess his relative ignorance and inanity, when compared with the Supreme Author of all things; and the same principle prevents him from placing his supreme regard and esteem on God, though reason dictates, and revelation commands this duty. He loves himself and his own gratifications too well. Then it is easy to understand, that pride and self-righteousness are nearly synonymous expressions: a proud being will never esteem his own

" righteousness as filthy rags," (Isaiah lxiv. 6 :) will never cordially beg for pardon of his sins : he has too good an opinion of his own labours, inventions, and performances : in a word, he is self-righteous ; and, in a similar way, it is plain, that the same being will aim at independence, and be impatient of control. In such a dangerous and corrupt state of human affections, the broad and crowded road to idolatry, which is the object we are seeking, is not difficult to be traced. For, whether we consider pride as a comprehensive principle, evolving itself, according to the explanation just given, in various mischievous operations ; or, whether we choose to confine the meaning of the term, no one will doubt, but that in fact, mankind in all ages have been grievously wanting in humility, have proudly set themselves up against God, have been actuated by inordinate self-love, and not submitting to the righteousness of God, and impatient of control, have endeavoured to establish their own righteousness. The existence of these principles and inclinations implies an absolute departure of the heart from the living God ; and when that has once taken place through the action of some steady cause, the progress to idolatry, or to some species of atheism, nearly allied to idolatry, is the next step. Man has departed from the true God, and there must be some device to quiet conscience. Thus, in rude and barbarous times, the proud, self-righteous devotee, will naturally have recourse to the sottish invention of the worship of wood, or stone, or metals, and become a gross idolater. He will burn part of the wood with fire, and of the rest he will make a god, and kneel before it. The discovery mightily pleases him : he has found out a god, exactly suited to his taste ; a god, who will easily pardon his vices, set a high value on his imagined virtues, and be constantly propitious to him ; a god, who is not a universal Governor or Benefactor, but who is particularly kind to himself and his countrymen ; a god, whom he can see and handle, and in whom he may pride himself, as having contrived and finished it with the tongs and hammer, or with the plane and compass ; a god, who is local and tutelar, and over which he himself has considerable power : he can place it in his temple, in his chamber, or in the camp.

The ancient idolaters, by their images, often represented deceased chiefs, or heroes, or kings, who were still supposed to possess a superintending influence over the affairs of men; and, not unfrequently, these departed beings appear to have ranked among the most wicked of mankind. In more modern times, even Christianity itself has been disgraced with the adoration of images, representations, and relics of saints; nor has the abominable superstition always sufficiently taken care, that the supposed saints themselves should be reputable characters.

In ages of great learning and refinement, the same principle of pride, which in religious concerns, blinding the understanding and corrupting the affections, effectually draws the heart from the living and true God, induces men to profess a reverence for abstruse and intellectual figments, as nature, a principle of order, or the soul of the universe. These notions of God, which prevail in polished seasons of the world, in one sense merit the imputation of idolatry, in another of atheism; and, in any possible interpretation, they must be deemed equivocal, unintelligible, and pernicious. The species of idolatry are exceedingly various; but they differ not much either in their source or their tendency. In all circumstances, man is miserable and blind, if he be not seeking and worshipping the true God in spirit and truth. If, in breach of the second commandment, he represent the glory of Jehovah by images, or if, in breach of the first, he set up a divinity opposite to Jehovah, in both cases he forms a deceitful basis for salvation and happiness, and directly affronts the perfections of God. Such practices are, therefore, forbidden throughout the Scripture, in the most positive manner.

The guilt of idolatry, though no sin is so much spoken against throughout the Old Testament, is not so offensive to natural conscience as that of crimes committed against our fellow-creatures.—Many persons are apt to wonder why the Israelites were so prone to it; not considering nor knowing their own idolatry, which works in a way more suited to present times and circumstances. But whoever understands, that idolatry implies the departure of the heart from the living God, and the fixing of it on something else; that to distrust his word, and to put confidence in some sensible

object, by which we would represent him to our minds,—still further, that to glory in our own strength and righteousness, instead of seeking salvation by grace through faith only, proceeds from pride, and pours all possible contempt on the Divine Majesty, will not wonder at God's indignation against this sin, will see how naturally it operates on the human mind, and how it affords a complete demonstration of the apostasy of man.

The ancient Church of God was distinguished from the nations all around, by the most express prohibitions of this sin. They were directed not to worship any but the living God, not even Jehovah himself by any images whatever; much less were they allowed to worship any creature by representations, which would be to break the two first commandments by the same act. He who knows the propensity of his own heart to distrust the providence and grace of God, and how eagerly we catch at any human relief, instead of patiently waiting upon God in trouble, will not wonder that the Israelites worshipped the calf in the absence of Moses, nor think the sin small, because they intended to honour Jehovah by the symbol.

Under the Gospel dispensation the prohibition of images continued, and, in the purest times, there was little occasion to dwell on the subject. God in Christ was worshipped, in spirit and in truth, by the primitive Christians: and, while they called on the Gentiles to turn away from their idols to the living God, idolatry itself, in any of its forms, could scarcely find a shadow of admission into the Christian Church.

For while men's hearts were filled with peace and joy in believing, while the doctrines of justification and regeneration were precious and all-important in their eyes, and they lived by the faith of Jesus, saw his glory, and felt in their souls the transforming power of his grace, the deceitful aids of idolatry had no charms. It was not till the knowledge of the Gospel itself was darkened and adulterated, that the miserable spirits of men had recourse to such vain refuges, and that the mind, no longer under the influence of the Holy Spirit, betook itself to the arts of sculpture and painting, in order to inflame its affections, and to kindle a false fire of devotion. Christians then worshipped the

true God with the understanding, and whoever was converted to the faith, ceased from idolatry. And, as we have seen, Christian emperors, particularly Theodosius, destroyed image-worship in their dominions. Origen, in his treatise against Celsus, observes, that it is not possible that any, by worshipping images, should attain the knowledge of God. Athanasius and Lactantius * strongly inculcate the same truth. Toward the end of the fourth century, some approach toward this evil appeared in the Church. Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, observes,† that he found a linen cloth hanging on the church-door painted, and having on it the image of Christ, or of some saint. "Observing this," says he, "so contrary to the authority of the Scriptures, I tore the cloth." The famous Jerome published, in Latin, an epistle of Epiphanius concerning this subject, and added his own testimony on the point. So evident is it, that at that time images were absolutely prohibited in the Church of Christ.

Augustine also gave his opinion against images. "They are of more force to pervert the soul than to instruct it." And "when images are once placed in temples, and had in honour, error creepeth in." Men, however, who had been lately turned from idols, began at length to paint or carve images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostles. Jerome observes, that the errors of images passed to the Christians from the Gentiles; and Eusebius, the historian, says, that images of Peter and Paul, and of our Saviour himself, were made in his time, which he took "to be a heathenish custom." They were not, however, worshipped, nor publicly set up in churches. Paulinus, who died bishop of Nola in the year 431, caused the walls of a temple to be painted with stories taken from the Old Testament, that the people might thence receive instruction: the written word was neglected, and these poor substitutes were placed in its room. A strong

Augustine's judgment respecting the use of Images.

Death of Paulinus, bishop of Nola, A.D. 431.

* In the three Homilies of the Church of England, against Peril of Idolatry, the controversy is handled with much solidity and historical information. I have made some use of them for my purpose. It seems proper that every Protestant Divine should acquaint himself with the fundamentals of the controversy, and be able satisfactorily to convince himself, that popery is not, what it pretends to be, founded on the precedents of Christian antiquity.

† See Vol. ii. p. 93.

sign of the growing ignorance! As the ignorance increased, these historical paintings and images increased also. Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, because of the danger of idolatry, brake to pieces the images then set up in the churches. I have already noticed the imprudent concession made by Gregory, bishop of Rome, on this occasion, to the growing superstition. Thus, six hundred years after Christ, images had begun to appear in churches, but still without idolatry. The authority of Gregory, however, had evil consequences: the spirit of idolatry grew stronger, as real spiritual knowledge decayed; and men having now, in a great measure, lost the divine way of applying to God through Christ, by faith, for the relief of their consciences, became still more prone to rely on idols. So closely connected is the doctrine of justification with purity of worship. In this respect the Roman * Church advanced in corruption more rapidly than the Eastern. And Grecian emperors employed themselves in destroying images and pictures, while in Italy they were held in idolatrous admiration. The evil, in truth, became incurable, because there was no clear and effectual knowledge of the Gospel, that might dissipate the clouds of error. Yet were men's opinions divided both in the east and the west; and, at length, the crisis arose, when the Christian world was formally broken into two parties on this question.

We are now advanced to the year 727, when Leo, the Isaurian, the Greek emperor,† began openly to oppose the worship of images, and produced the rupture with the Roman See, before mentioned. A Syrian born of Christian parents, named Beser, who had been taken by the Mahometans, and afterwards returned to the Romans, had imbibed an opinion of the unlawfulness of the practice, having, very probably, observed the advantage which it had given to the infidels. He was in great favour with the emperor, and convinced him by his arguments, that image-worship was idolatrous. But the most eminent defender of the purity of divine worship in this point, and whom Fleury

The Emperor opposes the worship of Images, A.D. 727.

* I say the Roman; for in other parts of the West, we shall see, that some opposition was made to idolatry.

† He is surnamed Iconomachus. He died of a severe cholic, in 741.

therefore, in his popish zeal, calls the author of the heres was Constantine, bishop of Nacolia in Phrygia. Convin in his judgment, and zealous to propagate what appea to him to be right, Leo assembled the people, and with frankness and sincerity, which mark his character, publi avowed his conviction of the idolatry of the growing pr tice, and declared that images ought not to be erected adoration. Such a declaration in the sixth century wo have raised no ferment in Christendom; but idolatry l been gradually advancing as the simplicity and purity Christian faith had decayed. Men of no religious sol tude naturally conformed themselves to the habits of times: persons who had some concern for the soul had b so long trammelled in a variety of superstitions for the lief of conscience, and the true relief of Christ's atonem was so little understood and relished, that the emperor evidently in the minority through the Christian wo As yet no synods had given a sanction to image-worsh Precedents of antiquity were entirely against it. T word of God, which ought to have influenced the minds men infinitely more than either, was in full opposition the practice: but so deeply had error prevailed; so c venient did wicked men find it to commute for the ind gence of their crimes, by a zealous attachment to the ido trous externals; and so little was the Scripture then re or studied, that the subjects of Leo murmured against hi as a tyrant and a persecutor. Even Germanus, the bish of Constantinople, with equal zeal and ignorance, assert that images had always been used in the Church, and d clared his determination to oppose the emperor at all even It is not necessary to give a detail of the paltry evasio and frivolous arguments, with which he endeavoured support the idolatry. Desirous, however, of strengthenii himself against the emperor, he wrote to the bishop Rome, who warmly supported the same cause, and l reasonings of the same nature. Never was a more instructi lesson given to pastors, to teach the word of God in si plicity and faithfulness. Conscience will be disquieted times in men not altogether given up to a reprobate min and, if peace by Jesus Christ, through faith alone, be n

* Fleury, b. xlii. 1.

stedfastly preached, men distressed for their sins will flee to idolatry with all their might, which will give them a false peace, and confirm them in sinful practices. By the knowledge of Christ crucified alone can we be brought to a sound peace of conscience, and be constrained effectually to serve God and our neighbour in love. We have often, in the course of this history, seen this connection of sound doctrine and holy practice, and we are now stating the reverse of the picture. Nor can the spirit and principles of those Christians, who supported divine truth in the world, be so clearly understood without some knowledge of the real grounds of popery.

He who filled the Roman See at this time was Gregory the second, whom for his open defence and support of idolatry, I shall venture to call the first POPE of Rome. Many superstitions and abuses had been growing ;* and since the decease of Gregory I. I have for the most part been silent concerning the Roman bishops, because very little of godliness appeared among them. The most honourable part of their conduct related to the encouragement of missions and the propagation of

The first Pope of Rome.

* One will deserve to be specified, as it marks the decline from Evangelical purity of doctrine. It was not until the days of this Gregory, that church-yards had a beginning. The dead had been usually interred near the highways, according to the Roman laws, and Christian congregations had followed the practice ; at least, they had burial places remote from the city. But, in Gregory's time, the priests and monks began to offer prayers for the deceased, and received gifts from the relations for the performance of these services ; on which account these ecclesiastics requested leave of Gregory, that the dead might be interred near the places of the monks' abode, or in the churches or monasteries, that the relations might have a better opportunity of joining in the funeral devotions. Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, introduced the custom into England in 750 ; hence the origin of CHURCH-YARDS in this island used as burial-grounds. The practice itself is certainly innocent ; though its first origin was extremely superstitious. The attentive reader will judge hence of the progress of the doctrine of purgatory, and the avarice of the ecclesiastics connected with it ; above all, of men's departure from the article of justification ; which, if it had remained in any degree of purity in the Church, would have effectually excluded these abominations. See Newcombe's Hist. of the Abbey of St. Albans, p. 109. While men rested in Christ, and dared to behold themselves complete in him, they had no temptation to apply to the false refuge of prayers for the departed. In the article of death they committed their souls and bodies to their Saviour. That hope of glory being lost, they struggled, in vain, through life, with doubts and fears, and departing in uncertainty, left to the charity of friends to help out their supposed defect of merit, and "found no end in wandering mazes lost."

the Gospel among the Gentiles; in which, many who were actuated by the same spirit as those who had been sent by Gregory I. were successful in their provinces; and pure religion, in the fundamentals, at least, was extended into distant regions, while Rome and Italy grew more and more corrupt. The open avowal, however, of idolatry, was reserved for Gregory II, and from this time I look on the bishops of Rome as Antichrist.

Rebellion trod on the heels of idolatry. Greece and its neighbouring islands opposed the emperor, and set up an usurper; so infatuated were men with image-worship. But the rebels were routed; and the usurper was taken and beheaded.

Leo, called also Leo III. has been so blackened by contemporary writers, that it is not easy to form a just idea of his character. The same observation may, for similar reasons, be extended to his son and successor. All that can be advanced with certainty is, that his cause was just, and his zeal sincere, though his temper was too warm. He might be a pious Christian; there is doubtless no proof to the contrary. He not only condemned the worshipping of images, but also rejected relics and the intercession of saints. But there lived none at that time capable of doing justice to the holiness of his motives, if indeed, as there is reason to hope, they were holy.

In the year 730 he published an edict against images, and after having in vain endeavoured to bring over Germanus to his views, he deposed him, and set up Anastasius in his room, who supported the emperor. There was a porch in the palace of Constantinople, in which was an image of Christ on the cross. Leo, who saw that it had been made an engine of idolatry, sent an officer to pull it down. Some women, who were there, intreated that it might be spared, but in vain. The officer mounted a ladder and struck three blows with a hatchet on the face of the figure, when the women threw him down by pulling away the ladder, and murdered him on the spot:* however, the image was pulled down and

Leo's edict against Images, A.D. 730.

* This first instance of idolatrous zeal which occurs in Christendom, shows that the worshippers of images naturally connect the idea of sanctity with the wood or stone, and therefore the charge of literally worshipping inanimate matter, which the Scriptures make against pagan idolaters, is

burnt, and a plain cross was set up in its room; for Leo only objected to the erection of a human figure. The women afterwards insulted Anastasius, as having profaned holy things. Leo put several persons to death, who had been concerned in the murder, and, such was the triumph of idolatry at length, that the murderers are honoured as martyrs, by the Greek Church, to this day! More blood was spilt on the occasion, partly through the vehemence of the emperor, and partly through the obstinacy of the idolaters.

The news flew to Rome, where the same rage for idolatry prevailed, and the emperor's statues were pulled down and trodden under foot. Italy was thrown into confusion, serious attempts were made to elect another emperor: and the pope encouraged these attempts. He also prohibited the Italians from paying tribute to Leo any longer, say the Greek writers, and some of the partizans of the Roman See, while the French writers represent him as endeavouring to quell the rebellion. It is difficult to give a fair statement of Gregory's conduct on this occasion; certain it is, that his obstinate defence of idolatry actually fomented the rebellion, and in the end, established the temporal power of his successors on the ruins of the imperial authority.* His conduct was indirectly rebellious, if it was not directly so; for he wrote to Anastasius, that if he did not return to the catholic faith, he should be deprived of his dignity.† Gregory must have known, that this was, in effect, to oppose the emperor himself. This was one of the last acts of the Roman prelate. He was succeeded by Gregory III, who wrote to the emperor in these arrogant terms:‡ "Because you are unlearned and ignorant, we are obliged to write to you rude discourses, but full of sense and the word of God. We conjure you to quit your pride, and hear us with humility.—You say that we adore stones, walls, and boards. It is not so, my lord; but those symbols make us recollect the persons whose names they bear, and exalt our grovelling

just when applied to popish idolaters. By an induction from particulars, it were easy to prove, that the cases are similar, and, that futile distinctions and evasions may equally be applied to both, to cover and soften what cannot be vindicated in either.

* See Mosheim, Cent. viii. [Pars 2.] c. 3. s. 11. † Fleury, c. xlii. 7.

‡ [Ap. Baron. ad Ann. 726.]

minds. We do not look upon them as gods;—but if it be the image of Jesus, we say, "Lord! help us." If it be the image of his mother, we say, "Pray to your Son to save us." If it be of a martyr, we say, "St. Stephen, pray for us." *—We might, as having the power of St. Peter, pronounce punishments against you; but as you have pronounced the curse upon yourself, let it stick to you.—You write to us to assemble a general council; of which there is no need. Do you cease to persecute images, and all will be quiet.—We fear not your threats; for if we go a league from Rome, toward Campania, we are secure." † Certainly this is the language of Antichrist supporting idolatry by pretences to infallibility, and despising both civil magistrates and ecclesiastical councils.

I cannot do justice to Leo, because we have not his answers to the pope. But perhaps the language of Gregory will enable the reader for himself to vindicate the emperor. It is not to be wondered at, that Leo refused to have any further intercourse with the Roman prelate. In 732, Gregory, in a council, excommunicated all, who should remove or speak contemptuously of images. And Italy being now in a state of rebellion, Leo fitted out a fleet, which he sent thither; but it was wrecked in the Adriatic. He continued, however, to enforce his edict against images in the east, while the patrons of the fashionable idolatry supported it by various sophisms. In all his conduct, Gregory now acted like a temporal prince: he supported a rebellious duke against Luitprand, king of the Lombards, his master, and fearing the vengeance of the latter, he applied to Charles Martel, mayor

Leo excommunicated by the Pope, A.D. 732.

* From these specimens the reader may judge whether the pope or the emperor was better acquainted with the Scripture. A pagan philosopher would have defended gentile idolatry much in the same manner; and the dependence, which both the pagan and the papist place on the image, demonstrates, that they imagine the power of the saint or demon to be intimately connected with the image, which represents, as it were, the body, of which the object of their worship is the soul, so justly do the Scriptures describe idolaters as literally worshipping the works of their own hands, and the man of sin as worshipping demons. (1 Tim. iv.) Sophistry may evade, but it cannot confute. When men cease to hold the Head and to be satisfied with Christ as their all, they fall into these or similar errors. The heart, which feels not the want of the living God, as its proper nutriment, will feed on the ashes of idolatry.

† [These are merely extracts from a very long letter.]

of the palace in France,* offering to withdraw his obedience from the emperor, and give the consulship of Rome to Charles, if he would take him under his protection.† Charles, however, by his wars with the Saracens, was prevented from complying with the pope's request. But he left his power and ambitious views to his son and successor Pepin. Charles, Gregory, and Leo, all died in the same year 741, and left to their successors the management of their respective views and contentions.

Ch. Martel, Gregory III. and Leo, die in the same year, A.D. 741.

Constantine VI. surnamed Copronymus, inherited his father Leo's zeal against images: and, as both the east and the west were precipitating themselves into idolatry, hence neither of these princes have met with a fair and impartial historian.‡ Meanwhile the Arabians persecuted the Christians with unrelenting barbarity in the East, while the real Church of God was desolated on all sides, and suffered equally from enemies without and within her pale. Zachary was the next pope after Gregory III. an aspiring politician, who fomented discord among the Lombards, and, by his intrigues, obtained from their king Luitprand an addition to the patrimony of the Church. The Roman prelates had ceased to worship God in spirit and in truth, and were now become mere secular princes.

Zachary showed how well he merited the title of a temporal governor. He had the address to preserve still a nominal subjection to the Greek emperor, while he seized all the power of the Roman dukedom for himself, and looked out for a protector both against his lawful sovereign and against the Lombards. This was Pepin, the son and successor of Charles Martel in France, who sent a case of conscience to be resolved by the pope, namely, whether it would be just in himself to depose his sovereign Childeric III. and to reign in his room? § Zachary was not ashamed

* This is he who had stopped the progress of the Saracen arms. Mayor of the palace, was the title of the prime minister in France, who during the reigns of a succession of weak princes, governed with sovereign power.

† This shows that the charge of rebellion against the emperor is not unjustly made against this pope.

‡ Theophanes relates some ridiculous things of Copronymus, which only prove the strength of his own prejudices, p. 346. And Fleury follows him as his guide.

§ Fleury, xliii. 1. calls him a weak and contemptible prince. So the

Pope Zachary dies, A.D. 752.

to answer in the affirmative: Pepin then th his master into a monastery, and assumed title of king. Zachary died soon after, viz the year 752.

The Greek emperor was unable to cope with the subt of the pope and the violence of the Lombards. Raver the capital of his dominions in Italy, was taken by k Astulphus, who had succeeded Rachis, the successo Luitprand. This government, called the Exarchate, continued in Italy about a hundred and fourscore ye Stephen, the successor of Zachary, finding the supe strength of the Lombards, now solicited the aid of C stantine, who was too much employed in the East, to s

Constantine VII. holds a council of 338 bishops A.D. 754.

any forces into Italy. In the year 754, the peror held a council of 338 bishops, to dec the controversy concerning images. They expr themselves not improperly on the nature of heresy.* "Jesus Christ," say they, "hath delivered from idolatry, and hath taught us to adore him in spirit a in truth. But the devil not being able to endure beauty of the Church, hath insensibly brought ba idolatry under the appearance of Christianity, persuadi men to worship the creature, and to take for God a wo to which they give the name of Jesus Christ."

Reinforced by the decrees of this council against imag worship, Constantine burnt the images, and demolished t walls, which were painted with representations of Christ the saints ; and seemed determined to exterminate all t vestiges of idolatry. In the mean time, in Italy, Steph pressed by the victorious arms of Astulphus, applied hi self to Pepin, and wrote to all the French dukes, exho ing them to succour St. Peter, and promising them the r mission of their sins, a hundred fold in this world, and the world to come life everlasting. So rapidly advanc the popedom ! A letter now was brought to the pope fr the emperor, ordering him to go to Astulphus, and dema the restitution of Ravenna. Superstition was every whe

French kings had been for some time. But Gregory I. would have t Pepin, that the weakness of the sovereign's faculties gave the servant right to usurp the master's authority. Gregory feared God : wher idolatry had hardened the hearts of these popes, and left them no law their own insatiable ambition.

* [Cent. Magd. Cent. viii. c. 9. p. 550—65.] Fleury, xliii. 7.

so strong, that there was no danger incurred by such a step; and the weakness of the emperor, and the distraction of his affairs, allowed him not to give any other sort of succour to Italy. Stephen sent to the king of the Lombards, to demand a pass. This was granted, and he set out from Rome, to go to Astulphus. A short time before he undertook this journey, messengers had arrived to him from Pepin, encouraging him to go along with them into France. Stephen arrived at Pavia, the capital of Lombardy, and after an ineffectual interview with the king, went into France, where Pepin treated him with all possible respect, and promised to undertake an expedition into Italy to relieve the Roman See. Stephen anointed with oil the king of the Franks; and, by the authority of St. Peter, forbad the French lords, on pain of excommunication, to choose a king of another race.

Thus did these two ambitious men support one another in their schemes of rapacity and injustice. In the pope the evil was aggravated by the pretence of religion.* "It is you," says Stephen, "whom God hath chosen for this purpose by his prescience from all eternity. For whom he hath predestinated, them he also called; and, whom he called, them he also justified." It must be owned, that Stephen was fitter to conduct a negotiation, than to expound a text.

Pepin attacked Astulphus so vigorously, that, in the end, he obliged him to deliver the Exarchate, that is, Ravenna, and twenty-one cities besides, to the pope. Constantine, alarmed at the danger of his dominions in Italy, sent an embassy to king Pepin, to press him to deliver the Exarchate to its rightful sovereign; but in vain. In the issue, the Pope became the proprietor of Ravenna and its dependencies, and added rapacity to his rebellion.

From this time he not only assumed the tone of infallibility and spiritual dominion, but became literally a temporal prince. On the death of Astulphus, Desiderius, duke of Tuscany, in order to obtain the succession, promised Ste-

* Fleury, a much better divine than Stephen, is struck with the absurdity of the allusion, xliii. 15. If I am somewhat more secular in this narration than in general, the importance of the subject, which is nothing less than the establishment of the papal power, and the vindication of faithful witnesses, who from age to age protested against it, may afford a sufficient apology. Popery once established, I shall not so minutely attend her steps, but seek the children of God, wherever they are to be found.

phen, to deliver to him some other cities, which the Lombards had taken from the emperor. Stephen embraced the offer without hesitation, assisted Desiderius in his views, and obtained for the popedom the duchy of Ferrara, and two other fortresses. The injured emperor, in the mean time, continued to exterminate idolatry in the East; but, whether his motives were pious or not, our ignorance of his private character will not suffer us to ascertain. The ambitious and successful Stephen held the popedom five years, and died in 757. His successor Paul, even before his appointment to that dignity, had taken care to cultivate the friendship and secure the protection of Pepin. The maritime parts of Italy still obeyed the emporor, and these, together with the Lombards, threatened the pope, from time to time; whence he was induced to write frequently to the king of France for assistance.*

Death of Pope Stephen III. A. D. 757.

Constantine forbad every where the addressing of prayers to the Virgin Mary, or to other saints, and discountenanced the monks through his dominions. He is said to have treated the worshippers of images with great barbarity, and to have been profane and vicious in his own practice. But such censures were the natural and obvious effect of his conduct.

In the year 768 died Pepin, the great supporter of the popedom. Its grandeur was, however, not yet arrived at maturity. Adrian, who was elected pope in 772, was not inferior to his predecessors in the arts of ambitious intrigue. He received the homage of Rieti and Spoleto, towns of Lombardy, and allowed them to choose a duke among themselves. Partly by these means, and still more by the powerful alliance of Charles, the son and successor of Pepin, commonly called Charlemagne for his great exploits, he strengthened himself against the hostilities of king Desiderius. He received from the French king a confirmation of Pepin's donative of the Exarchate, with some considerable additions of territory. The friendship of ambitious men is cemented by views of interest. This was exactly the case

Death of Pepin, A.D. 768.

Adrian I. elected pope, A.D. 772.

* It is remarkable, that Fleury blames this pope for representing his secular affairs as if they were spiritual. [B. xliii. c. 31.]

of Charles and Adrian. In a superstitious age, the king derived from the sacred character of the pope the most substantial addition to his reputation, and was enabled to expel Desiderius entirely from his dominions. In the year 774, he assumed the title of king of France and Lombardy. The last king of the Lombards was sent into a monastery in France, where he ended his days. In the next year, the emperor Constantine died, after having vigorously opposed image-worship all his reign. At the same time also died the Mahometan Caliph Almansor, the founder of Bagdad, which from that time became the residence of the Saracen monarchs; whose empire then began to carry more the appearance of a regular government, and ceased to be so troublesome to the remains of the old Roman empire, as it had formerly been.

Charlemagne assumes the title of king of France and Lombardy, A.D. 774.

Leo, the son and successor of Constantine, trode in the steps of his father and grandfather, and exercised severities on the supporters of image-worship. But, as he died in the year 780,* his wife Irene assumed the government in the name of her son Constantine, who was only ten years old. She openly and zealously supported idolatry. The East was so eagerly addicted to it, that there wanted only the authority of a sovereign to render it triumphant. Images gained the ascendancy; and the monastic life, which either the piety or the prudence of three emperors,—for I cannot ascertain their real character,—had much discouraged, became again victorious in Greece and Asia.†

Leo IV. dies, A.D. 780.

In 784 Irene wrote to Adrian, desiring his presence at a council to be held for the support of image-worship; at least that he would send legates to it. Tarasius, bishop of Constantinople, just appointed, and perfectly harmonizing with the views of the empress, wrote to the same purport. Adrian's answer is worthy of a pope. He expresses his joy at the prospect of the establishment of image-worship; and, at the same time, testifies his displeasure at the presump-

* Fleury, xliv. 16.

† If the plan, on which I have chosen to write a Church-history, need the authority of any writer to support it, the words of Fleury are very decisive. B. xliv. 17. "The temporal affairs of the Church, nay, of the Roman Church, do not belong to an ecclesiastical history."

tion of Tarasius, in calling himself universal patriarch: he demands the restoration of St. Peter's patrimony, which, during the schism, the emperors of Constantinople had withheld: and sets before the empress the munificent pattern of Charlemagne, who had given to the Roman Church, to be enjoyed for ever, provinces, cities, and castles, once in possession of the Lombards, but which of right belonged to St. Peter. Ambition and avarice were thus covered with the thin veil of superstition. But this was the age of clerical usurpations. Large domains were now commonly annexed, by superstitious princes, to the Church, for the pardon of their sins; but the pope was the greatest gainer by this traffic. That which is most to our purpose to observe, is the awful departure, which had commonly been made, throughout Christendom, from the all-important article of justification. While this is firmly believed and reverenced, it is impossible for men to think of commuting for their offences with Heaven; and it is itself the surest defence against clerical encroachments, superstition, idolatry and hypocrisy. But the pulpits were silent on this doctrine: during this whole century, false religion grew without any check or molestation; and vices, both in public and private life, increased in proportion.

In the year 787 the second council of Nice was held under the empress: and of such a council it is sufficient to say, that it confirmed idolatrous worship.* Pope Adrian, having received the acts of the council, sent them to Charlemagne, that he might procure the approbation of the bishops of the West. But here his expectations were disappointed.—United in politics by the coincidence of interested views, they were however found to disagree in religious sentiments. Charlemagne, though illiterate himself, was one of the greatest patrons of learning: and, if he may be supposed to have been in earnest in any opinions, he would naturally be much influenced by the famous Alcuin, an Englishman, whom he cherished and esteemed. The customs and habits of the West were far from universally favouring the reigning idolatry. I am anxiously looking for the features

Irene calls a Council at Nice, A.D. 787.

* This was the seventh General Council; and the second of Nice. It began in September 787.

of the Church of Christ in this very gloomy period, and I conjecture that her existence was most probably to be found in the Churches lately planted, or, in those which were then in an infant state. Our own island was decidedly, at that time, hostile to idolatry. The British Churches execrated the second council of Nice;* and some even of the Italian bishops protested against the growing evil. Nor is it probable, that the churches of Germany, now forming, were at all disposed to receive it. Men, who first receive Christianity from zealous teachers, are simple and sincere; nor is it easy to convince an ingenuous person, that idolatry, however qualified or explained, is allowable on the plan of the Scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament. France itself had, as yet, shown no disposition positively in favour of idolatry. The Roman See alone, in Europe, had in form supported and defended it. And experience proves, that the greatest stages of degeneracy are to be found in the Churches which have subsisted the longest.

Charlemagne could not but be struck at the discordancy of the Nicene council with the habits of the West; and was therefore so far from receiving, with implicit faith, the recommendation of it by pope Adrian, that he ordered the bishops of the West to examine the merits of the question. The issue was, the publication of the Carolin books, in which the famous Alcuin had at least a distinguished share. In these the authors find fault with a former synod held in Greece, under Constantine, which forbad the use of images. For they held the dangerous opinion of Gregory 1st, namely, that these might be set up in churches, and serve as books for the instruction of the people. But they condemn, in very free terms, the late Grecian synod, which enjoined the worship of images. They find fault with the flattering addresses made by the Greek bishops to pope Adrian. They allow the primacy of St. Peter's See,

* Hoveden Annal. pars prior. p. 405. Usher. Annals, pp. 19, 20. The former of these writers tells us, that Alcuin composed the Carolin books. [Hoveden's words are Carolus rex Francorum misit synodalem librum—in quo libro (heu pro dolor) multa inconvenientia et veræ fidei contraria reperiebantur; maxime—imagines adorari debere quod omnino ecclesia Dei execratur contra quod scripsit Albinus epistolam ex authoritate divinarum scripturarum mirabiliter affirmatam illamque cum eodem libro ex personâ episcoporum ac principum Nostrorum regi Francorum attulit.]

but are far from founding their faith on the pope's decrees. They condemn the worship of images by scriptural arguments, by no means impertinent or contemptible. These, however, need not be repeated on the present occasion.*

Engilbert, the ambassador of Charles, presented these books to Adrian. This ambitious politician, who subsisted by the protection of Charlemagne, and who was concerned to maintain the honour of his See, replied with great prudence. It is evident, from his whole conduct, that his object was the temporal interests of the popedom. Hence his answer to Charles was tame and insipid, and his defence of image-worship weak and inconclusive.† Charles and the French Churches persevered in their own middle practice: they used images, but they abhorred the adoration of them. In the year 794, at Frankfort upon the Maine, a synod was held, consisting of 300 bishops, who condemned the second council of Nice, and the worship of images. In this synod, Paulinus, bishop of Aquileia, in Italy, bore some share. All his life, however, Adrian continued on good terms with Charlemagne. He died in the course of the next year, and was succeeded by Leo III. Political intrigue, and secular artifice, not theological study, was then the practice of Roman bishops. The Irish, at this time, particularly excelled in divinity, travelled through various countries, and became renowned for their learning; and the superior light, exhibited by England and France in the controversy of images, seems to prove that these countries, in their knowledge of Scripture, and also in their regard for its doctrines, far exceeded Rome. Yet so strongly were men prejudiced in favour of the dignity of the Roman See, that it still remained in the height of its power, and was enabled in process of time to communicate its idolatrous abominations through Europe. In the East the worship of images was triumphant, but as yet not universal.‡

A synod held at Frankfort, A.D. 794.

The year 795 terminated the life and the popedom of Adrian I.

* See Du Pin, Councils of viiith century.

† This is allowed by Du Pin. Councils of viiith century.

‡ Irene, toward the close of this century, viz. about the year 797, dethroned her son Constantine, and put out his eyes with such violence, that he lost his life. This monster, a worthy patroness of idolatry, then reigned alone, and co-operated with the pope of Rome, in the support of Satan's kingdom. She was deposed and banished by Nicephorus, A.D. 802.

This chapter contains the narrative of the most fatal events which the Church had ever seen. The Arian heresy had disfigured and deeply wounded her constitution, but she had recovered, and confounded this adversary. The Pelagian poison had operated for a time; but its detection and expulsion had even contributed to recover her health, and to restore her to a great degree of apostolical purity. Other heresies, which affected the doctrine of the Trinity, had been successfully opposed: superstition, for a number of centuries, had sullied her beauty, but had left her vitals untouched. Idolatry, at length, aided by the same superstitious propensity, prevailed to disunite her from Christ, her living head. The reigning powers, both in the east and the west, were overgrown with false worship: even those parts of the west, which as yet were not disposed to receive idolatry, were deeply prepared for the gradual admission of it, partly by the growing of superstition, and partly by the submission of all the European Churches to the domination of the Roman See. There the seat of Antichrist was firmly fixed. Rebellion against the lawful power of the magistrate, the most arrogant claims to infallibility, and the support of image-worship, conspired with the temporal dominion lately obtained by the bishop of Rome, to render him the tyrant of the Church. His dominions, indeed, were not large; but, in conjunction with the proud pretensions of his ecclesiastical character, they gave him a superlative dignity in the eyes of all Europe. It was evident that the face of the whole Church was altered: from the year 727, to about the year 2000, we have the dominion of the Beast;* and the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth, which was to continue 1260 days, or forty and two months, that is, for 1260 years. We must now look for the real Church, either in distinct individual saints, who, in the midst of popery, were preserved by effectual grace in vital union with the Son of God, or, in associations of true Christians, formed in different regions, which were in a state of persecution and much affliction. Where then was the Church in the eighth century? She still subsisted; and the opposition made to idolatry by Charles and the council of Frank-

Corruptions of Christ's religion had begun to prevail, A.D. 727.

* Rev. xi. and xiii.

fort, demonstrates her existence. Nothing but the influence of principles very opposite to those which were fashionable at Rome can account for such events, at a time when the dignity of the Roman See was held in universal veneration. After all, it is in the propagation of the Gospel among the Pagans, that the real Church is chiefly to be seen in this century. Some real work of this kind was carrying on, while the popedom was forming; and, by the adorable Providence of God, pious missionaries, who entered not into the recent controversies, but were engaged in actions purely spiritual, were patronized and supported in preaching Christ among foreign nations by the same popes of Rome, who were opposing his grace in their own.* Their ambition led them to cherish the zeal of the missionaries, but with how different a spirit! To this scene let us now direct our attention.

CHAP. IV.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY, INCLUDING THE LIFE OF BONIFACE, ARCHBISHOP OF MENTZ.

WILLIBRORD,† with other English missionaries, continued to labour with success in the conversion of the Frisons. His episcopal seat was, as we have seen,‡ at Utrecht; for fifty years he preached, founded churches and monasteries, and appointed new bishops. The consequence of his labours was, that great numbers of Pagans were received within the pale of the Church.

The § great light of Germany in this century was an Englishman named Winfrid, born at Kirton‖ in Devonshire, about the year 680. He was brought up in the monastic

* Should any persons startle that I call image-worship by no better name than idolatry, and rank pagan and papal practices in the same class, I would refer such to the censure of St. Paul on the Galatians, iv. 8, 9. Idolatry being with them merely mental, originated in a self-righteous principle, and the Apostle looks on them as worshippers of false gods, and informs them that they were returning again to bondage. How much more justly may image-worship be called "the doing service to them which by nature are no gods," where the idolatry is both mental and external!

† [Bonifacii Ep. 94. The letters of Boniface are differently numbered in different editions, the arrangement here followed is that of Giles.] Fleury, l. xli. 1.

‡ See page 419 of this volume.

§ Fleury, xli. 35, &c. Alban Butler, Vol. vi. [June 5th.]

‖ [Rather Crediton.]

life from infancy. His residence was in the monastery of Nuitshell, in the diocese of Winchester, which was afterwards destroyed by the Danes, and was never rebuilt. Here he became acquainted with the sacred and secular learning of the times. At the age of 30, he was ordained priest, on the recommendation of his abbot, and laboured with much zeal in preaching the word of God. His spirit was ardent, and he longed to be employed as a missionary in the conversion of Pagans. The example of a number of pious persons of his own country might, no doubt, have great influence with him; for we have seen already, that the zeal of spreading the Gospel was peculiarly strong in the British isles. He went over with two monks into Friezeland about the year 716. He proceeded to Utrecht "to WATER, where Willibrord had PLANTED;" but finding that circumstances rendered it impracticable at present to preach the Gospel there, he returned into England with his companions, to his monastery.

Winfrid, an English Missionary, A.D. 716.

On the death of the abbot of Nuitshell,* the society would have elected Winfrid in his room; but the monk, steady to his purpose, refused to accept the Presidency; and with recommendatory letters from the bishop of Winchester, went to Rome, and presented himself to the pope, expressing a desire of being employed in the conversion of infidels. Gregory II. encouraged his zeal, and gave him a commission of the most ample and unlimited nature in the year 719.

With this commission Winfrid went into Bavaria and Thuringia. In the first country he reformed the Churches, in the second he was successful in the conversion of infidels. Here also he observed, how true religion, where it had been planted, was almost destroyed by false teachers: some pastors, indeed, were zealous for the service of God, but others were given up to scandalous vices: the English missionary beheld their state, and the ill effects of it on the people with sorrow; and laboured with all his might, to recover them to true repentance.

It was with sincere delight that he afterwards learned that the door, which had been shut against his first attempts in Friezeland, was now opened for preaching the Gospel in that country. Rat-bod, king of the Frisons, who

* [Vit. S. Bonifacii auctore Willibaldo.]

had planted idolatry afresh among his subjects, was de
and the obstacles were removed. Winfrid returned i
Friezeland, and for three years co-operated with Willibro
The pale of the Church was hence enlarged: churc
were erected: many received the word of God; and ic
atry was more and more subdued.

Willibrord, declining in strength through old age, ch
Winfrid for his successor. I have before observed, t
the duration of his pastoral labours, in his mission, was
less than fifty years. The example of this great and h
person had long before this stirred up others to labour
the best of causes. Soon after that he, with eleven co
panions in 690, had begun to preach the Gospel in Frie

Two other English Missionaries, A.D. 694.

land, two brothers * of the English nation we
over into the country of the ancient Saxons,
order to preach to the idolaters. They were bo
called Ewald. They arrived in this count
about the year 694, and meeting with a certain stewa
desired him to conduct them to his lord. They were e
ployed all the way in prayer, in singing psalms and hymn
The barbarians fearing lest these men might draw the
lord over to Christianity, murdered both the brothers; a
thus, toward the close of the foregoing century, it pleas
God to take to himself two persons who had devoted ther
selves to preach the Gospel of his Son among the heathe
The time of the more peculiar visitation of Germany w
reserved for the age which we are now reviewing.

It must have been extremely delightful to Willibror
to have met with a coadjutor so zealous and sincere
Winfrid.† However, the latter declined the offer, becau
the pope had enjoined him to preach in the eastern par
of Germany; and he felt himself bound to perform h
promise. It is not possible, indeed, to conceive such
man as Gregory to have had any other views than tho
of secular ambition in exacting this promise from Winfri
But it seems also equally apparent, that the motives of tl
latter were holy and spiritual. Willibrord acquiesced
Winfrid's desires, and dismissed him with his blessin
The younger missionary departed immediately, and can
into Hesse, to a place called Omenbourg, belonging

* [Bedæ Hist. l. v. c. 10. † [Vit. S. Bonifacii. c. 6, and 7.]

two brothers, who were nominal Christians, but practical idolaters. Winfrid's labours were successful, both on them and their subjects: and, throughout Hesse, or at least a very great part of it, even to the confines of Saxony, he erected the standard of truth, and upheld it with much zeal, to the confusion of the kingdom of Satan. It ought not, however, to be concealed, that Winfrid suffered great hardships in a country so poor and uncultivated as the greater part of Germany then was; that he supported himself at times by the labour of his hands, and was exposed to imminent peril from the rage of the obstinate Pagans.

After some time he returned to Rome, was kindly received by Gregory II. and was consecrated bishop of the new German Churches, by the name of Boniface. There seems, even in that little circumstance, something of the policy of the Roman See. A Roman name was more likely to procure from the German converts respect to the pope, than an English one. Gregory, moreover, solicitous to preserve his dignity, exacted from the new bishop an oath* of subjection to the papal authority, conceived in the strongest terms; a circumstance, remarkably proving both the ambition of Gregory and the superstition of the times. Boniface armed with letters from the pope, and what was far better, encouraged by the addition of fresh labourers from England, returned to the scenes of his mission.—Coming into Hesse, he confirmed, by imposition of hands, several † who had already been baptized, and exerted himself with much zeal against the idolatrous superstitions of the Germans. An oak of prodigious size had been an instrument of much pagan delusion: his sincerest converts advised him to cut it down; and he followed their counsel. It ought to be observed, that the famous Charles Martel protected him with his civil authority; for the dominion of the French extended a considerable way into Germany. It does not appear, however, that Boniface made any other use of this circumstance, than what the most conscientious ecclesiastic may do, wherever the Christian religion is established by the laws.

Daniel, bishop of Winchester, about the year 723, wrote

* [Bonifacii Op. Vol. ii. p. 9.]
† Fleury, b. xli. 44. &c. [Vit. S. Bonifacii. c. 8.]

to Boniface concerning the best method of dealing w
idolaters.* "Do not contradict," says he, "
The advice of Boniface A.D. 723. a direct manner their accounts of the genealo
of their gods; allow that they were born fr
one another in the same way as mankind are; this conc
sion will give you the advantage of proving that there
a time when they had no existence.—Ask them, who
verned the world before the birth of their gods—ask the
if these gods have ceased to propagate. If they have n
show them the consequence; namely, that the gods m
be infinite in number, and that no man can rationally be
ease in worshipping any of them, lest he should, by t
means, offend one, who is more powerful.—Argue t
with them, not in the way of insult, but with temper a
moderation; and take opportunities to contrast these
surdities with the Christian doctrine; let the Pagans
rather ashamed than incensed by your oblique mode
stating these subjects.—Show them the insufficiency
their plea of antiquity: inform them that idolatry did
ciently prevail over the world, but that Jesus Christ w
manifested, in order to reconcile men to God by his grac
—Piety and good sense appear to have predominated
these instructions, and we have here proofs, in addition
those already given, of the grace of God conferred on o
ancestors during the heptarchy.

Boniface preserved a correspondence with other frien
in England, as well as with Daniel. From his nati
country he was supplied also, as we have seen, with fello
labourers. In Thuringia he confirmed the churches, d
livered them from heresies and false brethren, and t
work still prospered in his hand.

In the mean time, like all upright and conscientio
men, he found himself often involved in difficulties, a
doubted in what manner he should regulate his condu
in regard to scandalous priests, who greatly obstructed h
mission. He laid his doubts before his old friend the bish
of Winchester.† Should he avoid all communication wi
them, he might offend the court of France, without who
civil protection he could not proceed in his mission. Shou

* [Ep. 14. inter Ep. Bonifacii.]
† Bonif. Ep. 12. Fleury, b. xli. [c. 48.]

he preserve connexion with them, he was afraid of bringing guilt upon his conscience. Daniel * advises him to endure, with patience, what he could not amend: he counsels him not to make a schism in the Church, under pretence of purging it; and, at the same time, exhorts him to exercise church-discipline on notorious offenders.

Boniface desired Daniel also to send him the book of the prophets,† "which," says he, "the abbot Winbert, formerly my master, left at his death, written in very distinct characters. A greater consolation in my old age I cannot receive; for I can find no book like it in this country; and, as my sight grows weak, I cannot easily distinguish the small letters, which are joined close together in the sacred volumes which are at present in my possession." Do these things seem to belong to the character of an ambitious and insidious ecclesiastic, or to that of a simple and upright servant of Jesus Christ?

The reputation of this Saint,—such I shall venture to call him, from the evidence of facts,‡—was spread through the greatest part of Europe; and many from England poured into Germany to connect themselves with him. These dispersed themselves in the country, and preached in the villages of Hesse and Thuringia.

In 732, Boniface received the title of Archbishop,§ from Gregory III. who supported his mission with the same spirit, with which Gregory II. had done. Encouraged by a letter sent to him from Rome, he proceeded to erect new churches, and to extend the profession of the Gospel. At this time he found the Bavarian churches disturbed by an heretic called Eremvolf, who would have seduced the people into idolatry. Boniface condemned him according to the canons, freed the country from his devices, and restored the discipline of the Church.

Boniface made an archbishop, A.D. 732.

About the year 732, Burchard and Lullus were invited from England by Boniface, who made the former, bishop of Wurtzburg, where Kilian had preached and suffered martyrdom, about fifty years before. He was abundantly successful during the labours of ten years, by which his strength

* [Ep. 13.] † [Ep. 12.] ‡ [Vit. S. Bonifacii. c. 8.]

§ Boniface was the first archbishop of Mentz.

was consecrated bishop, gave up his bishopric in 752, and died a martyr. Bibl. Vit. X. Oct. 14.

In the year 723, Boniface wrote to Northelme, archbishop of Canterbury, in a strain, which equally shows the humility and sincerity of his spirit, and the superstition of the times.* In 738, he again visited Rome, being far advanced in life; and, after some stay, he induced several Englishmen, who resided there, to join with him in his German mission.—Returning into Bavaria,† by the desire of duke Odilo, he restored the purity of the faith, and prevailed against the artifices of some seducers, who had done much mischief both by false doctrine and flagitious example. He established three new bishopries in the country, at Saltzburg, Frisinghen, and Ratisbon. That of Passaw had been fixed before. It must, however, be observed, that the successes and conquests of the Carlovingian princes much facilitated his labours in Germany.

In writing to Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury,‡ after testifying his zealous adherence to the See of Rome, and his submission to its authority, he exhorts him to discharge his duty faithfully, notwithstanding the difficulties to which good pastors were exposed. "Let us," says he, ["stand in the battle in the day of] the Lord: for we live in days of affliction and anguish. Let us die, if God so please, for the laws of our fathers, that with them we may obtain the heavenly inheritance. Let us not be as dumb dogs, [silent] watchmen, or selfish hirelings, but as careful and vigilant pastors, preaching to all ranks, as far as God shall enable us, in season and out of season, as Gregory writes in his pastoral."

Adalbert,§ a Frenchman, a proud enthusiast, and Clement, a Scotchman, pretended that Christ, by his descent into hell, delivered the souls of the damned. The former was deceived by the most absurd and extravagant delusions, and the latter was infamous in life and conversation. Gevilieb also, a German bishop, who associated with them, had actually committed murder; but so ignorant and de-

* Ep. 40. See Fleury, xlii. 20. † [Vit. S. Bonifacii. c. 9.]

‡ Bonif. Ep. 63. Fleury, xlii. 35.

§ [Bonifacii Ep. 57. Act. Roman. Synod. de Hæret. a Bonifacio damnat. et Concil 9. German. 3.] Fleury, xlii. 50, &c.

praved were the rulers of the German Christians, that he was still allowed to continue a bishop without infamy. Boniface, who saw the evil of these things more deeply than others, desired that Adalbert and Clement might be imprisoned by the authority of Duke Carloman, and be secluded from society, that they might not corrupt others by their poisonous sentiments, and that Gevilieb might be deposed from his bishopric. He gained his point in the condemnation and imprisonment of the two former, and in the deposition of the latter. He, who has no charity for souls, and no prospects beyond those of this life, may harshly condemn the missionary; but every serious and candid mind will applaud the sincerity and uprightness of his intentions, and will wish for the exercise of discipline, though in a manner somewhat irregular, provided substantial justice be done, rather than that men should be allowed to corrupt their fellow-creatures, without mercy and without control. Of the guilt of these three men, there is abundance of evidence.

Boniface, at length, was fixed at Mentz, and he is commonly called archbishop of that city. The increase of his dignity does not, however, seem to have diminished his zeal and laboriousness. His connexion with England was constantly preserved; and, it is in the epistolary correspondence with his own country, that the most striking evidence of his pious views appears. In one of his epistles,* he mentions his sufferings from pagans, false Christians, and immoral pastors: he feels, as a man, these hardships, but intimates his desire of the honour of dying for the love of Him, who died for us. He often begged for books from England, especially those of Bede,† whom he styles the lamp of the Church. He wrote also a circular letter ‡ to the bishops and people of England, entreating their prayers for the success of his missions.

Many persons, while in obscure life, have professed much zeal for the service of God, but have declined in earnestness, as they advanced in years, particularly if they acquired honour and dignity in the world. This was not the case with Boniface. Though oppressed with age and infirmities, and greatly revered in the whole Christian

* [Ep. 27.] † [Ep. 37, 38, and 52.] ‡ [Ep. 36.]

world, he determined to return into Friezeland. Before his departure, he acted in all things as if he had a strong presentiment of what was to happen. He appointed Lullus, an Englishman, his successor, as archbishop of Mentz, and wrote to the abbot of St. Denys, desiring him to acquaint the king, Pepin, that he and his friends believed he had not long to live. He begged, that the king would show kindness to the missionaries whom he should leave behind him. "Some of them," said he,* "are priests dispersed into divers parts, for the good of the Church: others are monks, settled in small monasteries, where they instruct the children. There are aged men with me, who have long assisted me in my labours. I fear, lest after my death, they should be dispersed, and the disciples, who are near the pagan frontiers, should lose the faith of Jesus Christ. I beg that my son Lullus may be confirmed in the episcopal office, and that he may teach the priests, the monks, and the people. I hope that he will perform these duties. [On this account I beg that my request may be complied with, because] the priests, who are on the pagan frontiers, are very indigent. They can obtain bread, but no clothes, unless they be assisted, as they have been by me. Let me know your answer, that I may live or die with more cheerfulness."

It is most probable that he received an answer agreeable to his benevolent spirit, as, before his departure, he ordained Lullus his successor, with the consent of king Pepin.† He went by the Rhine into Friezeland, where, assisted by Eoban, whom he had ordained bishop of Utrecht, after the death of Willibrord, he brought great numbers of pagans within the pale of the Church. He had appointed a day to confirm those whom he had baptized. In waiting for them he encamped with his followers on the banks of the Bordne, a river which then divided East and West Friezeland. His intention was to confirm, by imposition of hands, the converts in the plains of Dockum. On the appointed day, he beheld, in the morning, not the new converts, whom he expected, but a troop of angry pagans, armed with shields and lances. The servants went out to resist, but Boniface, with calm intrepidity, said to his fol-

* Ep. [79. Fulredo.] † Fleury xlii. 20. [Vit. S. Bonifacii. c. 10, and 11.]

lowers, " Children, forbear to fight; the Scripture forbids us to render evil for evil. The day, which I have long wished for, is come; hope in God, and he will save your souls." Thus did he prepare the priests and the rest of his companions for martyrdom. The pagans attacked them furiously, and slew the whole company, fifty-two in number, besides Boniface himself. This happened in the year 755, in the fortieth year after his arrival in Germany, and in the 75th of his age. The manner in which his death was resented by the Christian Germans,* shows the high veneration in which he was held through the country, and sufficiently confutes the notion, which some have held, of his imperious and fraudulent conduct. They collected a great army, attacked the pagans, slew many of them, pillaged their country, and carried off their wives and children. Those, who remained pagans in Friezeland, were glad to obtain peace by submitting to Christian rites. Such a method of showing regard for Boniface, might be expected from a rude and ill-informed multitude. But, rude as they were, they had the gift of common sense, and could judge whether the Apostle of the Germans was their sincere friend or not; and their judgment is with me decisive.

Boniface killed, A.D. 755.

A collection of Boniface's letters has been preserved, some of which have already been mentioned. That the reformation of the clergy, and the conversion of infidels, were the objects of his zeal, appears from his literary correspondence, no less than from the whole tenour of his life.† In the first letter to Nithardus,‡ in which he takes the name of Winfrid, he exhorts him to contemn the things of time and sense, and to devote himself to the study of the Scriptures, which he recommends as the highest wisdom. " Nothing," says he, " can you search after more honourably in youth, or enjoy more comfortably in old age, than the knowledge of holy Scripture."

In another letter,§ he exhorts the priest Herefrede, in his own name, and in that of eight bishops, who were with him, to show the memoir, which they sent him, to the king of the Mercians. The purport of it was to implore

* [Vit. S. Bonifacii. c. 12.] † Du Pin, 8th Cent. Bonif. ‡ [Ep. 4.] § [Ep. 61.]

that prince to check the debaucheries and disorders of his kingdom.

Excessively attached as he was, both to the Roman See and to monastic institutions, he knew how to subdue these attachments, and make them obedient to a stronger passion, viz. for genuine piety and virtue. He wrote to Cuthbert,* archbishop of Canterbury, desiring him to restrain the women of England from going in such numbers to Rome: "the greatest part of them," says he, "live in lewdness, and scandalize the Church; as there is scarcely a city in Lombardy and France, where there are not some English women of flagitious life and manners."

That association of ideas, which Mr. Locke describes, and which has been in all ages a powerful source of error and absurdity, both in principles and practice, accounts for the acrimonious expressions with which Protestant writers have too often indulged themselves in the relation of matters connected with the See of Rome.—The Magdeburgensian centuriators seem, by their treatment of the character of Boniface, to have largely imbibed this prejudice. I was surprised to find them giving sanction to the account of an old Chronicle,† which describes Boniface as raising soldiers to invade the Thuringians, absolving them from the payment of taxes to their civil governors, and justifying this extraordinary conduct by the recital of a divine vision. The manners of the eighth century certainly did not allow such an union of the military and sacerdotal character: moreover, the circumstances of Boniface's proceedings, as attested by history, and, above all, the unquestionable memorials of his evangelical labours, forbid me to entertain such sentiments of the Apostle of Germany. If he had had soldiers at his devotion, he surely might have avoided those hardships which he endured, and have prevented the murder of himself and of his companions in the plains of Dockum. The account seems to have been forged, in order to justify the conduct of military prelates, and of papal tyranny in after-ages. The censures also, which Boniface passed upon Adalbert and Clement, seem to have been arraigned by the Centuriators, without foundation. It looks

* [Ep. 63.]

† Cent. viiith. c. 2. De propagatione Ecclesiæ, De Bonifacio. [p. 20, and 21.]

like an instance of great partiality to call such men "good persons," who were convicted of scandalous wickedness. But it would be tedious to particularize the charges which these writers have formed against Boniface, supported chiefly by mere suspicions and conjectures.

That Mosheim should inveigh against this missionary, is what might be expected from his prejudices. But he should have written with consistency. He speaks of the pious labours of Boniface, of his finishing with glory the task he had undertaken, and of the assistance which he received from a number of pious men, who repaired to him from England and France.* "His piety," he adds, "was ill rewarded by that barbarous people by whom he was murdered. If we consider the eminent services he rendered to Christianity, the honourable title of the Apostle of the Germans will appear to have been not undeservedly bestowed." Who could imagine that this pious pastor should, by the same writer, be accused, without warrant, of often "employing violence and terror, and sometimes artifice and fraud, in order to multiply the number of Christians." He ascribes to him also "an imperious and arrogant temper, and a cunning and insidious turn of mind."

Which of these two accounts shall we believe? for, it is as equally impossible that both should be true, as that piety should be consistent with a spirit of violence, arrogance, and fraud. But, it is thus, that men zealous to propagate divine truth in the earth, are often described by those, who arrogate to themselves the whole praise of judgment and candour. There has seldom existed an eminent and useful missionary, who has not, in this way, been aspersed. In the mean time, I am sensible, that the foundation of the strong prejudices against Boniface, is his attachment to the Roman See. I cannot observe, however, that he either practised idolatry, or taught false doctrine. Removed from the scene of controversy, he seems to have taken no part in the debate concerning images: he was ever invariable in opposing idolatry and immorality: he

Character of Boniface.

* Mosheim, Cent. viii. Pars i. c. 1. Sect 2. 3, and 4. [the language of Maclaine, Moshiem's translator, is stronger than Mosheim's text justifies, and therefore though he forms an unfavourable opinion of Boniface, and perhaps upon insufficient grounds, there is nothing inconsistent in his statements.]

lived amidst many dangers and sufferings; and he appears to have supported, for many years, an uniform tenour of zeal, to which he sacrificed all worldly conveniences, and in fine to have finished his course in martyrdom, and in the patience and meekness of a disciple of Christ. I shall leave it to the reader's judgment,* what estimate ought to be formed of him, after having observed, that God made large use of his labours by extending, in the north of Europe, the bounds of the Church, at the same time that they were so much contracted in Asia and Africa.

Winebald, the son of a royal English Saxon, shared with Boniface in his labours in Germany; his life was preserved, though in imminent danger from idolaters, and God blessed his work among the heathen: he died in 760.

Winebald dies, A. D. 760.

In Friezeland, the Church of Utrecht was governed by Gregory, who from the fifteenth year of his age, had been a follower of Boniface. Two of his brothers having been murdered in a wood, the barons, whose vassals they were, delivered the murderers bound into his hands. Gregory, after he had treated them kindly, bade them depart in peace, saying, Sin no more, lest a worse thing befal you. He was assisted in his ministerial labours by several disciples of various nations; some were of his own nation, the French, others were English, Frisons, newly-converted Saxons, and Bavarians. Scarcely a day passed, but early in the morning he gave them spiritual instruction. This man

* [Did the present Editor express an opinion on the character of Boniface, it would neither be so favourable as Milner's nor so unfavourable as that of Mosheim; that he was a pious man, a bold reprover of sin, and one zealous for the spreading of the knowledge of the truth as far as he understood it, there seems no great reason to doubt; but it must appear equally clear to every one, who reads the short discourses attributed to him, that his preaching was very different from that of Christ and his Apostles; a very favourite quotation with him is Ecclesiasticus iii. 30. which he cites thus —Sicut aqua extinguit ignem, ita eleemosyna extinguit peccatum, and his devotion to the see of Rome was so great as almost to justify Schlegel's remark that in his Missionary labours he had but one eye directed towards Christ, whilst the other was fixed on the Pope of Rome. Mosheim says, 'Epistolæ ejus animum passim produnt dominandi cupidum et superbum, vafrum, subdolum, immodicum honoris et jurium sacerdotalium dilatandorum studium, magnam denique cum multarum rerum apostolo necessariarum tum veræ religionis Christianæ ignorantiam.' He would not dissent from the opinion expressed in the latter part of this sentence; but can see nothing in Boniface's letters to justify the greater part of the former; he sees no evidence of his having been either *crafty*, *arrogant* or *ambitious*.]

affected no singularity either in habit or in diet. That he was not carried away by the torrent of popular superstition, is a strong proof either of great understanding, or of eminent piety, or of both. But he recommended sobriety among his disciples: was not to be moved from the path of duty by slander, and was boundless in his liberality to the poor. He died about the year 776.*

Gregory of Utrecht, an excellent character, dies, A.D. 776.

Liefuvyn,† an Englishman, one of his disciples, was distinguished by his labours among the missionaries of Germany. He ventured even to appear before the assembly of the Saxons held upon the Weser; and, while they were sacrificing to their idols, he exhorted them with a loud voice to turn from those vanities to the living God. As an ambassador from Jehovah, he offered them promises of salvation. And here his zeal seemed likely to have cost him his life: but he was at length suffered to depart, on the remonstrances‡ of Buto, one of their chiefs, who expostulated with them on the unreasonableness of treating an ambassador of the great God with less respect than they did one from any of the neighbouring nations.§ In the mean time, the arms of Charlemagne prevailed over the Saxons, and eventually, at least, facilitated the labours of Liefuvyn, who continued to preach among this people till his death.

Villehad, an English priest, born in Northumberland, was abundantly successful in the conversion of the Saxons.‖ It is true, that he taught under the protection and auspices of Charlemagne. But whatever may be thought of the motives of the latter, the views of the missionary might be, and probably were, upright and spiritual. Certainly he underwent great hazards,¶ overcame the ferocious spirits

* [Butler's Lives Aug. 25.] † [Idem. Nov. 12.] ‡ Fleury, xliv. 11.

§ Buto seems, in part at least, to have felt the power of the divine word commending itself to his conscience in the sight of God; and to have reported that God was of a truth with real Christian pastors, 1 Cor. xiv. 25. Effects of the kind, mentioned by the Apostle, have, in all ages, been very common, wherever the real Gospel is plainly and faithfully delivered. The message from God convinces and overawes the serious hearer, and, by its internal excellence, makes itself a way into the conscience. If Liefuvyn had preached mere morals, I should no more have expected such consequences from his harangues, than from the lectures of the Greek philosophers.

‖ [A Crantzius in Saxon. lib. ii. c. 14, and 15. and lib. i. c. 7, and 8. in Metrop.]

¶ Once when he was in danger of being put to death by the pagan Fri-

of the infidels by his meekness, and spread among the knowledge of the Gospel. A persecution drove once out of the country; but, by the power of the emp he again returned and prosecuted his labours. After vario contests, the Saxons were obliged to submit to Charlemagne and to become nominal Christians in general. But that this was universally the case, or even nearly so, the pious labours of a number of missionaries render very improbable.

Villehad was bishop of Bremen, and was called the Apostle of Saxony. He had begun his mission in Dockum, where Boniface was murdered. He was the first missionary who passed the Elbe. His attention to the Scriptures appears from his copying the epistles of St. Paul. He died in Friezeland, after he had laboured 35 years, and had been bishop of Bremen upwards of two years. To his weeping friends, he said in his dying moments, "Withhold me not from going to God: these sheep I recommend to Him, who intrusted them to me, and whose mercy is able to protect them." See Alban Butler, Vol. XI. Nov. 8.

Death of Villehad in Friezeland.

This was an age of missionaries: their character and their success form, indeed, almost the only shining picture in this century. Firmin, a Frenchman, preached the Gospel, under various difficulties,* in Alsace, Bavaria, and Switzerland, and inspected a number of monasteries. After all, the arms of Charlemagne contributed more than any thing else to the external reception of Christianity; and Alcuin, his favourite, laments, that more pains were taken to exact from the Saxons the payment of tithes, than to inform them of the nature of true religion. Teachers who were merely secular, drenched in the vices of human nature and of the times, would doubtless act in this manner. But I have attempted, from very confused and imperfect memoirs, to present to the reader, those, who in the north of Europe were indeed sent of God, and laboured in demonstration of the Spirit.

sons, some of them, struck with his innocence and probity, and doubting whether the religion which he preached might not be divine, said, "Let us cast lots whether we shall put him to death, or dismiss him." It was done so, and the lot decided in his favour. Fleury, l. xliv. c. 15. The custom of deciding cases of this nature by lot, was remarkably German. The classical reader may recollect a similar instance in Cæsar's Comm. toward the end of Lib. i. De Bell. Gall.

* Mosh. Cent. viii. [P. i. c. 1. s. 5.]

Rumold, a native either of England or of Ireland, should be added to the list. He travelled into Lower Germany, went into Brabant, diffused much light in the neighbourhood of Mechlin, and was made an itinerant episcopal missionary. In 775, he was murdered by two persons, one of whom he had reproved for adultery.*

Rumold, a Missionary in Lower Germany, murdered, A. D. 775.

Silvin, of Auchy, born in Toulouse,† was first a courtier, then a religious person, and afterwards appointed bishop among the infidels. His labours were, chiefly, in Terouanne, the north of France, which was, in this century, full of pagans and merely nominal Christians. He gathered in a large harvest, having preached for many years. He died at Auchy, in the country of Artois.

Virgilius,‡ an Irishman, was appointed bishop of Saltzburg, by king Pepin. During two years, his modesty prevented him from entering upon the office; but he was at length prevailed upon to receive consecration. He followed the steps of Boniface in rooting out the remains of idolatry in his diocese, and died in the year 780.§

Virgilius dies, A.D. 780.

* A. Butler, Vol. vii. [July 1.]

† See Alban Butler's Lives of Saints. [Feb. 17.]

‡ [Vit. S. Virgilii in Canisii lect. Antiq. tom. 3. part 2.]

§ A misunderstanding had once taken place between this missionary and Boniface. The latter accused him to the See of Rome, of teaching, "that there was another world, and other men under the earth, or another sun and moon." [Zech. Ep. 71 inter Ep. Bonifacii.] To the pious spirit of Boniface, a difficulty of solving the question arose, on this view of the tenets of Virgilius, how such ideas were compatible with the Mosaic account of the origin of all mankind from Adam, and of the redemption of the whole species by Jesus Christ. After all, it appears that Boniface was mistaken, and that Virgilius being better acquainted with the true figure of the earth, than most of his contemporaries in that ignorant age, only held the opinion of the Antipodes, a notion as sound in philosophy, as it is innocent in regard to Christianity. As Virgilius was afterwards made bishop of Saltzburg, he continued to labour in the same cause with Boniface, and to tread in his steps. It is more than probable, than both Boniface and the pope were satisfied of his soundness in the faith, and dismissed the accusation. It seemed worth while to state this matter in a true light, from the evidence of this letter. It appears, that Virgilius was not condemned for holding the doctrine of the Antipodes, and that the charge of Bower, against Boniface, is as malicious as it is ill-founded. See Hist. of the Popes (Zachary) —where the historian, without warrant, accuses Boniface of bearing a secret grudge to Virgilius, and of being actuated by a spirit of revenge.

CHAP. V.

AUTHORS OF THIS CENTURY.

THE most learned writer of this century, if we may except our countryman Bede, seems to have been John of Damascus. He was one of the first who mingled the Aristotelian or Peripatetic philosophy with the Christian religion.* This philosophy was gradually supplanting the authority of the Platonic. It makes no part of my subject, to explain the difference of the systems of Plato and Aristotle. Suffice it to say, that they were both very foreign to Christianity, and each, in their turn, corrupted it extremely. John was a voluminous writer, and became among the Greeks, what Thomas Aquinas afterwards was among the Latins. He seems to have defended the system, commonly called the Arminian notion of free-will, in opposition to the doctrine of effectual grace. This † was a natural consequence of his philosophizing spirit. For all the philosophers of antiquity, amidst their endless discordances, agreed in teaching man to rely altogether on himself. This is the dangerous philosophy, which St. Paul warns us to beware of. It hitherto wore, chiefly, the garb of Plato: it was now assuming that of Aristotle. In both these dresses, it was still "the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God." And even at this day, among all who lean to their own understanding, to the disparagement of revelation, its nature is the same, however varnished with the polish of Christian phraseology.

In the doctrine of the Trinity, John appears to have been orthodox: in other respects, he was one of the most powerful supporters of error. He was an advocate for the practice of praying for the dead, which he regarded as effectual for the remission of sins. This was a deplorable article of superstition, which had been growing in the Church, and wanted the sanction of a genius like that of John to give it lasting celebrity. I can find no evidences of his real knowledge or practice of godliness. And the reader will think he has been detained sufficiently by this Grecian author, after he has learned, that his eloquent and learned pen defended the detestable doctrine of image-

* Fleury, xlii. [c. 43.] † Du Pin, viiith. Cent. John of Damascus.

worship, and contributed more than that of any other author, to establish the practice of it in the east. In the mean time there arose no evangelical luminary, who might combat his arguments with sufficient ability. The Scripture itself, indeed, was more than half buried under the load of superstitions. The learning of this eastern father, was probably more accurate and refined than that of Bede. In the latter, however, we have seen the fullest evidence of Christian light and humility: in the former, as far as respects true wisdom, all is dark and dreary; and the baleful influence of his unscriptural opinions, however respectable he might be in a literary view, has seldom been exceeded by that of any other writer in the history of the Church.

I have already taken notice of the opposition made in the west, to the progress of image-worship by the authority of Charlemagne. The Caroline books, published in his name, were powerful checks against the growing evil; and it is more probable, that such a prince as Charlemagne was carried along by the current of the times, than that he directed the sentiments of the western Churches by his own theological studies. Political and secular reasons unhappily retained these Churches in the Roman communion, and, in process of time, the abominations of idolatry overspread them all. It is, however, a pleasing circumstance, that the labours of missionaries in the north of Europe, which form the most shining part of Christian history in this century, were all conducted by Christians of the west, and particularly by those who were the most remote from idolatry, those of our own country especially. There is, therefore, good reason to believe, that the new Churches in the north were taught to worship the living God, through the one Mediator Christ. For the British Churches expressed the most marked detestation of the second council of Nice. And Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, disproved its decrees in a letter, by express authorities of Scripture.* It is too true, that our ancestors, like the rest of Europe, learned at length to worship idols. For religious movements among churches

* Collier's Ecc. Hist. b. ii. [Vol. i. p. 139. See Hoveden's words in note at page 463 of this volume.]

are generally retrograde. Entirely distinct from human institutions of science, Christian views are most perfect at first, as being derived from the divine word, and impressed on the hearts of men by divine grace: the wisdom of this world, aided by the natural propensities of mankind, corrupts them afterwards by degrees, and too often leaves them, at length, neither root nor branch of evangelical light and purity.

Alcuin, who has been just mentioned, was born in England; * and was a deacon of the Church of York. He was sent ambassador into France by Offa, king of the Mercians, in the year 790. On this occasion he gained the esteem of Charlemagne, and persuaded that monarch to found the universities of Paris and Pavia. He was looked upon as one of the wisest and most learned men of his time.† He read public lectures in the emperor's palace, and in other places. He wrote, in an orthodox manner, on the Trinity, and, in particular, confuted the notions of Felix, bishop of Urgel, of whom it is sufficient to say, that he revived something like the Nestorian heresy, by separating the humanity from the divinity of the Son of God. Alcuin showed himself a master of his subject, and wrote in a candid and moderate spirit. He died in 804.

Alcuin, an Englishman, goes as ambassador to France, A.D. 790.

Dies, A.D. 804.

Even Italy itself was not disposed altogether to obey the pope, in regard to image-worship. Some Italian bishops assisted at the council of Frankfort, before mentioned; and Paulinus, of Aquileia, bore a distinguished part in it. This prelate wrote, also, against the error of Felix, and seems to have been one of the best bishops of his time. Let us try, from the scanty materials before us, if we can collect his views and spirit on subjects peculiarly Christian.

This bishop successfully opposed the error of Felix, concerning the person of Jesus Christ, and wrote a book of wholesome instructions, which, for a long time was supposed to be the work of Augustine.‡ It is remarkable, that he and some other Italian bishops, in the year 787,§ agreed to condemn the decrees of the second council of Nice, as idolatrous,

Firmness of Paulinus at the Second Council of Nice.

* Du Pin. † [W. Malmesb. p. 24, &c.] ‡ Du Pin.
§ See Dr. Allix, on the ancient Churches of Piedmont. [c. 8.]

though pope Adrian had assisted at that council by his legates, and used his utmost endeavours to maintain its authority. In the council of Frankfort also, the presence of two papal legates hindered not the firm agreement of Paulinus and other Italian bishops, with the decrees of the said council. These are clear proofs, that the despotism of Antichrist was, as yet, so far from being universal, that it was not owned throughout Italy itself; and, that in some parts of that country, as well as in England and France, the purity of Christian worship was still maintained. The city of Rome, indeed, and its environs, seems to have been, at this period, the most corrupt part of Christendom in Europe, nor do I remember a single missionary in these times to have been an Italian.

Paulinus, in his book against Felix, affirms, that the Eucharist is a morsel and bit of bread.* He maintains, that it is spiritual life or death in the eater, as he either hath faith or hath not: which seems to be a just and evangelical view of that divine ordinance, not only free from the absurdity of transubstantiation, but also expressive of the Christian article of justification, of which the reader hears very little in these cloudy times. Still more express testimonies to the essentials of salvation are not wanting in this author. He protests that the blood of those, who have themselves been redeemed, cannot blot out the least sin; that the expiation of iniquity is the exclusive privilege of the blood of Christ alone. He † defines the properties of the divine and human nature, as united in the person of Jesus Christ, with great precision; and so careful is he to describe the latter as circumscribed and limited by the bounds of body, as to form, at least, a strong consequential argument against the notion of transubstantiation. Hear how he comments on our Lord's well-known description of eating his flesh and drinking his blood in the 6th chap. of St. John's Gospel. "The flesh and blood is to be referred to his human, not to his divine nature. Yet, if he were not the true God, his flesh and blood could by no means give eternal life to those who feed upon him. Whence also John says, the blood of his Son cleanseth us

* Buccella et particula panis, in his dedication to Charlemagne.
† Allix. [c. 8.]

from all sin." Hear also how he speaks of the intercession of Christ. "Paul is not a mediator; he is an ambassador for Christ.—The advocate is He, who being also the Redeemer, exhibits to God the Father the human nature in the unity of the person of God and man.—John intercedes not, but declares that this mediator is the propitiation for our sins." Once more: "The Son of God Almighty, our Almighty Lord, because He redeemed us with the price of his blood, is justly called the true Redeemer, by the confession of all who are redeemed. He himself was not redeemed; He had never been captive: we have been redeemed, because we were captives, sold under sin,* bound by the hand-writing which was against us, which he took away, nailing it to his cross, blotting it out by his blood, triumphing openly over it in himself, having finished a work, which the blood of no other Redeemer could do." † Such is the language of this evangelical bishop, while he is opposing the Nestorian heresy revived by Felix. And here, at least, we see a due respect paid to Holy Scripture. Paulinus quotes, understands, and builds his faith upon it; and is equally remote from dependence on mere human reasonings, on the authority of the Church of Rome, or on any traditions.

Brief account of Paulinus.

This bishop was born about the year 726, near Friuli, was promoted to Aquileia in 776, was highly favoured by Charlemagne, and preached the Gospel to the pagans of Carinthia and Stiria, and to the Avares, a nation of Huns. One of his maxims was, "Pride is that, without which no sin is or will be committed: it is the beginning, the end, and the cause of all sin." I wonder not, that he, who in an age of dulness could see the nature of sin with so penetrating an eye, was confounded with the bishop of Hippo. He died in 804.‡ In a letter to Charlemagne, he complained of the want of residence in bishops, and of their attending the court. He cites a canon of the council of Sardica, in the fourth century, which forbade the absence of bishops from their dioceses, for a longer space than three weeks.

He dies, A.D. 804.

* Rom. vii. 14. † Coloss. ii. 14, 15.

‡ I have been obliged to Alban Butler for some of the foregoing particulars. But it is remarkable that he omits his testimony against image-worship. The reader should remember that Butler is a zealous Roman Catholic. [Jan. 28.]

CENTURY IX.

CHAP. I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THIS CENTURY.

We are penetrating into the regions of darkness, and a "land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death;" * and are carried, by every step, into scenes still more gloomy than the former. Here and there indeed, a glimmering ray of the Sun of Righteousness appears; but it is in vain to look for any steady lustre of evangelical truth and holiness. In such a situation, to pursue the chronological course of events, would be as tedious as it is unprofitable. The plan of history for each century should be modified by the existing circumstances. And there seem to be four distinct phenomena of Christian light in this period, which deserve to be illustrated in so many chapters: namely, in the 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th.—It shall be the business of this first chapter, to premise some general observations, which may enable the reader more clearly to understand those phenomena.

Several circumstances attended the thick darkness which pervaded this century: and they appear to be reducible to the following heads:—the preference given to human writings above the Scriptures,—the domination of the popedom,—the accumulation of ceremonies,—and the oppression of the godly.†

It was now fashionable to explain Scripture entirely by the writings of the fathers. No man was permitted, with impunity, to vary in the least from their decisions. The great apostolical rule of interpretation, namely, to compare spiritual things with spiritual,‡ was in a manner lost. It was deemed sufficient that such a renowned doctor had given such an interpretation. Hence, men of learning and

* Jerem. ii. 6.

† Centuriat. See their preface to the ixth. century. I have availed myself of some of the thoughts; the whole is ingenious and spirited.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

or practical piety.* The same judgment may be formed of the Roman popes. In this dark season, Pascasius Radbert introduced the absurd tenet of transubstantiation, which was opposed by John Scotus Eregina, and Rabanus, archbishop of Mentz, two of the most learned men of that age. But their learning seems to have had little connection with godliness, however they might successfully plead the cause of common sense in the controversy just mentioned. For, they joined in opposing the doctrine of grace, concerning which a controversy of some importance was raised in this century.†

Tenets of transubstantiation.

In France, the views of divine grace, revived by Augustine, were more and more darkened: and we shall presently find, that a zealous advocate for them could not be heard with candour. Ado, archbishop of Vienne, was, however, an eminent exception to this account. He was indefatigable in pressing the great truths of salvation. He usually began his sermons with these, or the like words: "Hear the eternal truth, which speaks to you in the Gospel;" or, "Hear Jesus Christ, who saith to you." He took particular care of the examination of candidates for orders; and was a very diligent disciplinarian. He permitted none, who were ignorant of Christian principles, to be sponsors to the baptized, or to be joined in matrimony, or to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, till they were better instructed. He was inflexibly vigilant against vice; and, while his own example was an honour to his profession, he enjoined his clergy to apprize him, if they should discover any slip in his conduct. Nor did king Lothaire find him obsequious to his lusts; for through Ado's vigorous remonstrances, he was obliged to desist from a design of divorcing his queen. He sympathized, however, with sincere penitents, and was a real friend to the poor, both in a spiritual and temporal sense: and was the founder of many hospitals for their reception.‡

In England, the decline of godliness was grievous, and§

* I say vital; for I am aware that Photius, bishop of Constantinople, flourished in this century: a person equally infamous for hypocrisy and ambition, and renowned for genius and ecclesiastical learning. What melancholy instances of contradiction does the history of mankind afford!

† See Chap. iv. ‡ Alban Butler, xii. [Dec. 16.]

§ There is reason, however, to believe, that a devotional and, probably

as * Huntingdon remarks, Divine Providence punished the Saxons by the invasion of the Danes, the most lawless and the most savage of all mortals. The great Alfred was indeed raised up to defend his country against them. And one of his speeches, delivered to the soldiers, before a battle, displays, at once, much good sense and a spirit of religion. He told his people, that their sins had given their enemies the advantage: that they ought to reform their own manners, in order to engage the favour of God on their side; that in other respects they had the superiority, Christians were fighting against heathens, and honest men against robbers: but theirs was not a war of ambition or conquest, but of necessary self-defence. In the battle which followed, he entirely defeated the Danes.

In † the preface to Gregory's Pastoral, a book translated into English, by this prince, for the benefit of his subjects, he observes, that when he came to the Crown, there were very few, south of the Humber,‡ who understood the common prayers in English, or who could translate a passage of Latin into the language of their own country. He sent copies of Gregory's Pastoral into every diocese, for the benefit of the clergy: with the same beneficent design, he translated also Bede's ecclesiastical history:§ he himself constantly attended public worship; and, from his youth, he was wont to pray for grace, and to use serious methods to subdue his passions. Through life he appears to have maintained a beautiful consistency of character. He endeavoured to promote the knowledge of the English tongue among all persons of tolerable rank; and expressed his opinion, that those, who meant to attain eminence in the

an evangelical spirit prevailed in some parts of the British Isles. For monks in Ireland and Scotland, who gave themselves to prayer, preaching, and teaching in the middle ages, were called Culdees, that is, Cultores Dei. They were first known in this century by that name, at St. Andrew's particularly: but were never settled in England, except at St. Peter's in York. A. Butler, Vol. v. [May 10. St. Comgall.]

* [Prologus II. de Huntingdon ad lib. v. et R. de Hoveden. Pars i. p. 412.]

† Alfred invited John Scotus, not the famous John Scotus Erigena,[1] from Old Saxony into England: and founded the University of Oxford. That of Cambridge was of a date somewhat later. ‡ Collier, Vol. i. b. 3d. [p. 165.]

§ [W. Malmesb. l. ii. c. 4.]

[1] [The identity of Erigena with John, Alfred's friend, is denied by Mabillon, but it does not seem by any means certain that he was not mistaken in this respect.]

state, should also know the Latin language. It is pleasant to see the ebullitions of genius and of strong sense in an iron age, like this before us. Alfred would, doubtless, in more auspicious times, have appeared among the first of mankind. There seems no reason to doubt the sincerity of his piety. A religious spirit had this advantage in a rude age, that it was not thought to reflect disgrace on the powers of the understanding. But, this glorious sun, after it had shone a little time through an atmosphere enveloped with vapours, and had in some degree dispersed them, was not able to illumine the region in which it appeared: The mist prevailed again, and England was covered with darkness.

It may be proper to remind the reader, that about the beginning of this century, Egbert became king of Wessex: that in 827, he became king of all England, near 400 years after the first arrival of the Saxons; and that Alfred was his grandson.

Egbert made king of all England, A.D. 827.

Charlemagne of France, who had flourished in the last century, died in the former part of this, aged 72, in the year 814. It is scarcely worth while to recount the SPLENDID SINS of this emperor, since his sanguinary ambition and his habitual lewdness, too plainly evince his want of Christian principle. He revived the western empire in Germany, which continues to this day. He was a great instrument of Providence, no doubt, in extending the pale of the Church; and, at the same time, he fixed the power of the popedom on the strongest foundations. His labours to revive learning were very great; but, like those of Alfred, they failed of success. His religious and moral character bears no comparison with that of the English monarch.

Death of Charlemagne, A.D. 814.

CHAP. II.

THE PAULICIANS.

ABOUT the year 660, a new sect arose in the East, the accounts of which, are far more scanty than a writer of real Church-history would wish.* Constantine, a person

* Photius, b. i. contra Manichæos, et Peter Siculus Hist. Manichæor.

Sect of Paulicians, A.D. 660.

who dwelt in Mananalis, an obscure town in the neighbourhood of Samosata, entertained a deacon, who having been a prisoner among the Mahometans, had returned from captivity, and received from the same deacon, the gift of the New Testament in the original language.* So early had the laity begun to think themselves excluded from the reading of the sacred volume; and the clergy, both in the East and the West, encouraged this apprehension. The growing ignorance rendered by far the greatest part of the laity incapable of reading the Scriptures. I do not find any ecclesiastical prohibitory decree in these times, nor was there much occasion for it. But Constantine made the best use of the deacon's present. He studied the sacred oracles, and exercised his own understanding upon them. He formed to himself a plan of divinity from the New Testament; and, as St. Paul is the most systematical of all the Apostles, Constantine very properly attached himself to his writings with peculiar attention, as indeed every serious theologian must do. He will find, no doubt, the same truths interspersed through the rest of the sacred volume, and a wonderful unity of design and spirit breathing through the whole; but, as it pleased God to employ one person more learned than the rest, it is highly proper, that the student should avail himself of this advantage. That Constantine was in possession of the genuine text,† was acknowledged universally. A remarkable circumstance! which shows the watchful providence of God over the Scriptures!—Amidst a thousand frauds and sophisms of the times, no adulteration of them was ever permitted to take place.

The enemies of the Paulicians give them the name from

These are the two original sources, from which Mosheim and Gibbon have drawn their information concerning the Paulicians. Photius and Peter have not fallen into my hands; and their prejudice and passion were so great, that my reader will very probably be no great loser by the circumstance. By the assistance of the two modern authors, I shall state the few facts which are known, and give as impartial a judgment concerning the sects in question as I can. The candour of Gibbon is remarkable in this part of his history. O si sic omnia!—Mosheim Eccl. Hist. ix. Cent. [p. ii. c. 5.] Gibbon, Vol. v. c. 54.

* [Petrus Siculus in Biblioth. Patr. vol. ix. pars post. p. 36. ed. Colon.]

† [Iisdem quibus apud nos verbis are the words of the translator of Petrus Siculus, τῇ γραφῇ και τοῖς οὕτως εἰσὶν ὡς και τὰ παῤ ἡμῖν απαραλλακτα, τα δε νοήματα διαστρεφουσι are those of Cedrenus Hist. Comp. v. i. p. 343.]

some unknown teacher; but there seems scarcely a doubt, that they took the name from St. Paul himself. For Constantine gave himself the name of Sylvanus; his disciples were called, Titus, Timothy, Tychicus, the names of the Apostle's fellow-labourers; and the names of the Apostolic Churches were given to the congregations formed by their labours in Armenia and Cappadocia.—Their enemies called them Gnostics or Manichees; and confounded them with those ancient sectaries, of whom it is probable that there were then scarcely any remains. It has been too customary to connect different and independent sects into one; and to suppose, that every new phenomenon in religion is nothing more than the revival of some former party. This is frequently the case, but not always. In the present instance, I see reason to suppose the Paulicians to have been perfect originals, in regard to any other denomination of Christians. The little, that has already been mentioned concerning them, carries entirely this appearance; and, I hope, it may shortly be evident that they originated from a heavenly influence, teaching and converting them; and that, in them we have one of those extraordinary effusions of the Divine Spirit, by which the knowledge of Christ and the practice of godliness is kept alive in the world.

The Paulicians are said to have rejected the two epistles of St. Peter. We know nothing of these men, but from the pens of their enemies. Their writings, and the lives of their eminent teachers, are totally lost. In this case, common justice requires us to suspend our belief; and, if internal evidence militate in their favour, a strong presumption is formed against the credibility of a report, raised to their disadvantage. This is the case in the present instance: for, there is nothing in St. Peter's writings that could naturally prejudice against those writings, persons who cordially received the epistles of St. Paul. There is, on the other hand, the most perfect coincidence of sentiment and spirit between the two Apostles; and, in the latter epistle of St. Peter, toward the end, there is a very remarkable testimony to the inspired character and divine wisdom of St. Paul. That this sect also despised the whole of the Old Testament, is asserted, but on grounds which seem utterly unwarrantable. For, they are said to have done

this as Gnostics and Manichees, though they steadily condemned the Manichees, and complained of the injustice which branded them with that odious name. They are also charged with holding the eternity of matter, and the existence of two independent principles; and with denying the real sufferings and real flesh of Christ. It seems no way was found so convenient to disgrace them as by the charge of Manicheism. But I cannot believe that they held these tenets; not only because they themselves denied the charge, but also because they unquestionably held things perfectly inconsistent with such notions. Is it possible, that rational creatures, men endued with common understanding, could agree to revere the writings of St. Paul, and to consider them as divinely inspired, and at the same time to condemn those of the Old Testament?

The pious, intelligent reader, who is moderately versed in Scripture, does not need to be told, that the Apostle is continually quoting the Old Testament, expounding and illustrating, and building his doctrines upon it: in short, that the New Testament is so indissolubly connected with the Old, that he, who despises the latter, cannot really, whatever he may pretend, respect the former as divine; and that this observation holds good in regard to all the writers of the New Testament, and to St. Paul more particularly. It is allowed also, that the Paulicians held the common orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, with the confession and use of which the whole apparatus of the Manichean fable seems incompatible. Let the reader reflect only on the light in which Manicheism appeared to Augustine of Hippo, after he became acquainted with St. Paul, and he will probably form a just estimate of this whole subject.

This people also were perfectly free from the image-worship, which more and more pervaded the East. They were simply scriptural in the use of the sacraments: they disregarded relics, and all the fashionable equipage of superstition; they knew no other Mediator but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sylvanus preached with great success. Pontus and Cappadocia, regions once renowned for Christian piety, were again enlightened through his labours. He and his associates were distinguished from the clergy of that day,

by their scriptural names, modest titles, zeal, knowledge, activity and holiness. Their congregations were diffused over the provinces of Asia Minor: six of the principal churches were called by the names of those to whom St. Paul addressed his epistles: and Sylvanus resided in the neighbourhood of Colonia in Pontus. Roused by the growing importance of the sect, the Greek emperors began to persecute the Paulicians with the most sanguinary severity; and, under Christian forms and names, they reacted the scenes of Galerius and Maximin. "To their other excellent deeds," says the bigotted Peter, the Sicilian, "the divine and orthodox emperors added this, that they ordered the Montanists and Manichees * to be capitally punished; and their books, wherever found, to be committed to the flames: also, that if any person was found to have secreted them, he was to be put to death, and his goods to be confiscated." False religion, in all ages, hates the light, and supports herself by persecution, not by instruction; while the real truth as it is in Jesus, always COMES TO THE LIGHT of Scripture, and exhibits that light plainly to the world by reading and expounding the sacred volume, whence alone she derives her authority.

A Greek officer, named Simeon, armed with imperial authority, came to Colonia and apprehended Sylvanus and a number of his disciples. Stones were put into the hands of these last, and they were required to kill their pastor, as the price of their forgiveness. A person named Justus, was the only one of the number who obeyed; and he stoned to death the father of the Paulicians, who had laboured twenty-seven years. Justus signalized himself still more by betraying his brethren; while Simeon, struck, no doubt, with the evidences of divine grace apparent in the sufferers, embraced, at length, the faith which he came to destroy, gave up the world, preached the Gos-

Paulicians persecuted.

* Such, I suppose, were the opprobrious names given to the Paulicians. The real Montanists had originated in the second century, and had probably now no existence. We see here a further proof of the vague and delusory modes of criminating the Paulicians. [The account which Petrus Siculus gives of these persons (and he is the original source from whence all our knowledge of them is derived) is so extraordinary and so inconsistent with itself that no unprejudiced mind can receive his testimony except with the very greatest suspicion. Faber on the Albigenses and Waldenses well points out the inconsistencies in this writer's statements.]

pel, and died a martyr. For a hundred and fifty years these servants of Christ underwent the horrors of persecution, with Christian patience and meekness; and if the acts of their martyrdom, their preaching, and their lives, were distinctly recorded, there seems no doubt, but this people would appear to have resembled those, whom the Church justly reveres as having suffered in the behalf of Christ during the three first centuries. During all this time the power of the Spirit of God was with them; and they practised the precepts of the 13th chapter to the Romans, as well as believed and felt the precious truths contained in the doctrinal chapters of the same epistle. The blood of the martyrs was, in this case, as formerly, the seed of the Church: a succession of teachers and congregations arose, and a person named Sergius, who laboured among them thirty-three years, is confessed by the bigoted historians to have been a man of extrordinary virtue. The persecution had, however, some intermissions, till at length, Theodora, the same empress, who fully established image-worship, exerted herself beyond any of her predecessors against them. Her inquisitors ransacked the lesser Asia, in search of these sectaries; and she is computed to have killed by the gibbet, by fire, and by sword, a hundred thousand persons.

Theodora, during the minority of her son Michael III. ruled as Empress, and fully established image-worship.

We have brought down the scanty history of this people to about the year 845. To undergo a constant scene of persecution with Christian meekness, and to render both to God and to Cæsar their dues all the time, at once require and evidence the strength of real grace. Of this the Paulicians seem to have been possessed till the period just mentioned. They remembered the injunction of Rev xiii. 10: "He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword: here is the faith and patience of the Saints." Let Christians believe, rejoice in God, patiently suffer, return good for evil, and still obey those whom God hath set over them. These weapons have ever been found too hard for Satan: the Church has grown exceedingly, wherever they were faithfully handled; and the power of the Gospel has prevailed. This was the case very eminently with the Church,

Such is the History of the Paulicians to A.D. 845.

in the era of Dioclesian's persecution. She not only outlived the storm, but also, under the conduct of Providence, became externally as well as internally, superior to her enemies. If the Paulicians had continued to act thus, similar consequences might have been rationally expected. But faith and patience failed at length. We are ignorant of the steps by which they were gradually betrayed into a secular spirit. About the year 845, they murdered two persecutors, a governor and a bishop: and a soldier called Carbeas, who commanded the guards in the imperial armies, that he might revenge his father's death, who had been slain by the inquisitors, formed a band of Paulicians, who renounced their allegiance to the emperor, negotiated with the Mahometan powers, and, by their assistance, endeavoured to establish the independency of their sect.

Declension of the Paulicians A.D. 845.

Theodora was succeeded by her son Michael.* Her cruelties and superstitions deserved the applause of Nicolas, who became pope of Rome in 858. In a letter he highly approved her conduct, and admired her on account of her implicit obedience to the Holy See. We learn from the biographer of the emperor Michael what Theodora had done to call forth the encomiums of this pontiff. "She resolved," says he, "to bring the Paulicians to the true faith, or cut them all off root and branch." A resolution worthy of a truly Catholic princess! "Pursuant to that resolution, she sent some noblemen and magistrates," not preachers or missionaries, "into the different provinces of the empire; and by them some of those unhappy wretches were crucified, some put to the sword, and some thrown into the sea and drowned." Thus were they slaughtered to the number of one hundred thousand, and their goods and estates confiscated.†

Nicolas made Pope, A.D. 858.

The pope alluded ‡ to this bloody massacre, when he commends Theodora in the same letter for the manly vigour

* This is Michael III. and is surnamed the Sot, or the Drunkard. He was the son of the emperor Theophilus, and came to the throne A.D. 842, under the tuition and regency of his mother Theodora.

† Porphyrog. [in Vit. Mich.]

‡ [This allusion is questioned by Maitland (Letter to Rose, p. 24, &c.) and had Milner seen Nicolas's letter he probably would have agreed with Maitland in thinking that the Empress's zeal for Image-worship was what the Pope meant to commend.]

she exerted, the Lord co-operating,* as he blasphemously adds, against obstinate and incorrigible heretics. Nicolas at the same time observes, that the heretics experiencing in her all the resolution and vigour of a man, could scarcely believe her to be a woman. Indeed zeal for religion had changed in Theodora, as it did in our Queen Mary, the tender and compassionate heart of a woman into that of a merciless and blood-thirsty tyrant. And here I am not disposed to suppress, that from the pope's own words, it appears, that the Apostolic See had its share in the glorious exploit just mentioned; for the pope, after telling her that the heretics dreaded, and at the same time admired, her resolution and steadiness in maintaining the purity of the Catholic faith adds, "*and why so, but because you followed the directions of the Apostolic See?*"† So truly was Antichristian tyranny now established at Rome!

Michael, the son of Theodora, fled before the arms of Carbeas; whose successor Chrysocheir, in conjunction with the Mahometans, penetrated into the heart of Asia, and desolated the fairest provinces of the Greeks. In the issue, however, Chrysocheir was slain, the Paulician fortress Tephrice was reduced, and the power of the rebels was broken, though a number of them in the mountains, by the assistance of the Arabs, preserved an uncomfortable independence. The ferocious actions of the LATER Paulicians show, that they had lost the spirit of true religion; their schemes of worldly ambition were likewise frustrated. And similar consequences, in more recent ages, may be found to have resulted from political methods of supporting the Gospel.

A number of this sect, about the middle of the eighth century, had been transplanted into Thrace, and subsisted there for ages, sometimes tolerated, at other times persecuted, by the reigning powers. Even to the end of the seventeenth century they still existed about the valleys of Mount Hæmus. Of their religious history, during this period, I can find nothing: and, in our days, they seem to have nothing more of the Paulician sect than the name. I

* Domino cooperante.

† Concil. Lab. Nic. Ep. xiv. [This passage is an extract from Bower's Lives of the Popes, but the original here is 'cur hoc nisi quia sedis Apostolicæ dogmata sequebaris et Constantinopolitani monita Pontificis cui Romana ecclesia communicabat, amplectebaris.']

cannot follow the learned author, to whom I owe much for this account,* in his conjectures concerning this people's dispersion through the European provinces. Nor does there seem any good evidence of the Waldenses owing their origin to the Paulicians.† Such speculations are too doubtful to satisfy the minds of those, who prefer the solid evidence of facts to the conjectural ebullitions of a warm imagination.

On the whole, we have seen, in general, satisfactory proof of the work of divine grace in Asia Minor, commencing in the latter end of the seventh century, and extended to the former part of the ninth century. But, where secular politics begin, there the life and simplicity of vital godliness end. When the Paulicians began to rebel against the established government; to return evil for evil; to MINGLE AMONG THE HEATHEN,‡ the Mahometans; and to defend their own religion by arms, negotiations, and alliances, they ceased to become the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, and the salt of the earth. Such they had been for more than a hundred and eighty years, adorning and exemplifying the real Gospel, by a life of faith, hope, and charity, and by the preservation of the truth in a patient course of suffering, looking for true riches and honour in the world to come; and, no doubt, they are not frustrated of their hope. But, when secular maxims began to prevail among them, they shone, for a time, as heroes and patriots, in the false glare of human praise; but they lost the solidity of true honour, as all have done in all ages, who have descended from the grandeur of the passive spirit of conformity to Christ, and have preferred to that spirit the low ambition of earthly greatness.§

* [Gibbon.]

† Milner uses the word Waldenses, as comprehending both the Waldenses and Albigenses, and there certainly seems very strong reason to believe that the latter did owe their origin to the Paulicians.]

‡ Psalm cvi. 35.

§ Natalis Alexander, a voluminous French historian, and more vehemently attached to the popedom than Frenchmen commonly are, couples the Paulicians and also Claudius of Turin, of whom the reader will hear in the next Chapter, with Wickliffites, Lutherans, and Calvinists. He brands them as enemies to the adoration of the Cross of Christ, which, he says, the true Church always adored, "not only the genuine Cross, but an effigy of it, as soon as the Church obtained liberty under Christian princes." Tom. v. p. 636—638. This deserves to be considered as the testimony of a learned adversary to the evangelical character of the Paulicians, and of Claudius of Turin.

CHAP. III.

THE OPPOSITION MADE TO THE CORRUPTIONS OF POPERY IN THIS CENTURY, PARTICULARLY BY CLAUDIUS BISHOP OF TURIN.

We have seen the light of divine truth shedding its kindly influence in the East; let us now behold the reviving power of its beams in the West. We must not expect to observe it generally illuminating either of those two great divisions of the Christian world, but only shining in some particular districts. The absolute power of the pope, the worship of images, and the invocation of Saints and Angels, were opposed, as in the last century, by several princes and ecclesiastics. A council at Paris, held in the year 824, agreed with the council of Frankfort in the rejection of the decrees of the second council of Nice, and in the prohibition of image-worship. Agobard,* archbishop of Lyons, wrote a book against the abuse of pictures and images; in which he maintained, that we ought not to worship any image of God, except that which is God himself, his eternal Son; and, that there is no other Mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ, both God and man. I have already observed, that the novel notion of transubstantiation was vigorously opposed by Rabanus † and Scotus Erigena,‡ the two most learned men of the West, in this century; nor was that doctrine, as yet, established in the kingdom of Antichrist. Rabanus treats it as an upstart opinion; § it may be proper to add, that Bertram, a monk of Corbie, being asked whether the same body, which was crucified, was received in the mouth of the faithful, in the sacrament, answered, that "the difference

Council at Paris, A. D. 824.

* [Aub. Mir. Auct. c. 240.] † [J. Trith. de Script. Eccles. c. 267.]
‡ [J. Trithem. c. 262. and Sigebert. c. 94.]
§ [Rabanus says 'quidam nuper de ipso sacramento corporis et sanguinis Domini non rite sentientes dixerunt hoc ipsum corpus et sanguinem Domini quod de Maria Virgine natum est et in quo ipse Dominus passus est in cruce et resurrexit de sepulcro (idem esse quod sumitur de altari) cui errori quantum potuimus ad Egilum Abbatem scribentes, de corpore ipso quid vere credendum sit aperuimus.' Lib. Pœnit. c. 33.—Joannes Scotus 'Sacramenta Altaris non verum corpus et verum sanguinem esse Domini sed tantum Memoriam veri corporis et sanguinis.' Hincmar. de Prædest. l. i.c. 31.]

is as great as between the pledge, and the thing for which the pledge is delivered: as great as between the representation and the reality." No protestant, at this day, could speak more explicitly the sense of the Primitive Church. In Italy itself, Angilbertus, bishop of Milan, refused to own the pope's supremacy, nor did the church of Milan submit to the Roman See till two hundred years afterwards.*

But these are only distant and remote evidences, that God had not forsaken his Church in Europe. There want not, however, more evident demonstrations of the same thing in the life and writings of Claudius, bishop of Turin, a character worthy to be held in high estimation by all, who fear God: but so little justice, in our times, is done to godliness, that while the names of statesmen, heroes, and philosophers, are in every one's mouth, the name of this great reformer, has, probably, been not so much as heard of, by the generality of my readers. To me he seems to stand the FIRST in the order of time among the Reformers. Let us collect the little information which we have been able to obtain concerning him.

Claudius was born in Spain. In his early years he was a chaplain in the court of Lewis the meek: he was reputed to have great knowledge in the Scriptures; † insomuch that Lewis perceiving the ignorance of a great part of Italy, in regard to the doctrines of the Gospel, says Fleury, and willing to provide the churches of Piedmont with one, who might stem the growing torrent of image-worship, promoted Claudius to the See of Turin, about the year 817. Claudius answered the expectations of the emperor: by his writings, he copiously expounded the Scriptures: by his preaching, he laboriously instructed the people: "in truth," says Fleury, "he began to preach and instruct with great application." The calumnies, with which his principles were aspersed, are abundantly confuted by his commentaries on various parts of the Old

Claudius made bishop of Turin, A. D. 817.

* I have thus far, in this chapter, availed myself of the labours of Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, iiird. Vol. 151. [Diss. 24. c. 11.] &c. In the sequel of the chapter, I make use of the remarks of Allix on the Churches of Piedmont, of the Centuriators, and of Fleury, though a Roman Catholic.

† Fleury, b. 47. [c. 20.] In this, and some other matters, the testimony of a Roman Catholic to the character of the first Protestant Reformer, is of great weight.

and New Testament, still extant in manuscripts, in various French libraries. A comment on the Epistle to the Galatians, is his only work which was committed to the press. In it he every where asserts the equality of all the Apostles with St. Peter. And, indeed, he always declares Jesus Christ to be the only proper head of the Church. He is severe against the doctrine of human merits, and of the exaltation of traditions to a height of credibility equal to that of the Divine Word. He maintains that we are to be saved by faith only ; holds the fallibility of the Church, exposes the futility of praying for the dead, and the sinfulness of the idolatrous practices then supported by the Roman See. Such are the sentiments found in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians.

In his commentary on St. Matthew, besides an explication of the Sacrament, very different from that of Paschasius, who defended transubstantiation, about sixteen years after, we meet with some pious sentiments worth transcribing. The words,* " I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, till that day that I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," he paraphrases thus : " no longer will I delight in the carnal ceremonies of the synagogue, among which the Paschal Lamb was most distinguished ; for the time of my resurrection is at hand ; that day will come, when, placed in the kingdom of God, exalted to the glory of immortal life,† I shall be filled with a new joy, together with you, on account of the salvation of the people born again from the fountain of the same spiritual grace.—What else does he mean by new wine, but the immortality of renewed bodies ? By saying ' with you,' he promises them the resurrection of their bodies, that they might put on immortality. The expression ' with you,' must not be referred to the same time, but to the same event of the renewal of the body. The Apostle declares that we are risen with Christ, that by the expectation of the future he might bring present joy."‡

* [The original from which this is translated is given in Allix's remarks on the ancient Church of Piedmont, p. 62.]

† [Orig. gloriâ vitæ immortalis sublimatus.]

‡ This can hardly be allowed to be the whole of St. Paul's meaning, in the expression "risen with Christ ;" nevertheless, the ideas of Claudius are good, so far as he goes.

In the end of his commentary on Leviticus, dedicated to the Abbot Theodemir, he writes some things, which may exhibit and illustrate his cares and labours in the support of real godliness.

"The beauty of the Eternal Truth and Wisdom doth not exclude those who come to her. God grant I may always have a constant will to enjoy her, for the love of whom I have undertaken this work!—From the ends of the earth she is near to all who seek her:—she instructs within, and converts those who behold her.—No man can judge of her; no man can judge well without her.—We are not commanded to go to the creature, that we may be happy, but to the Creator, who alone can fill us with bliss.—The will fastening itself on the unchangeable good, obtains happiness. But when the will separates itself from the unchangeable good, and seeks her own good exclusively, or directs herself to inferior or external good, she falls from God."—These truths, conceived in the very taste of the bishop of Hippo, are followed by a long quotation from that father, which expressly forbids the worship of Saints; the substance of which is thus expressed: * "We must honour them, because they deserve to be imitated, not worship them with an act of religion.—We envy not their bliss in the uninterrupted enjoyment of God, but we love them the more, because we hope for something correspondent to these their excellencies, from him who is our God as well as theirs." These things, says Claudius, are the strongest mysteries of our faith. In defending this truth, I am become a reproach to my neighbours; those, who see me, scoff at me, and point at me to one another. But the Father of mercies and the God of all consolations, has comforted me in my tribulations,† that I may be able to comfort others, who are oppressed with sorrow and affliction. I rely on the protection of him, who has armed me with the armour of righteousness and of faith, the tried shield for my eternal salvation.

Complaints had, it seems, been made against Claudius, at the court of Lewis, for having broken down images through his diocese, and for having written against the worship of them. Being reproached by Theodemir for his

* [Liber de Vera religione, c. 55. Sect 108, and 9.] † 2 Cor. i. [3, and 4.]

conduct, Claudius wrote an apology, of which the following is an extract.* "Being obliged to accept the bishopric, when I came to Turin, I found all the churches full of abominations and images; and because I began to destroy what every one adored, every one began to open his mouth against me.—They say, we do not believe that there is any thing divine in the image; we only reverence it in honour of the person whom it represents. I answer, if they, who have quitted the worship of devils, honour the images of saints, they have not forsaken idols; they have only changed the names. For whether you paint upon a wall the pictures of St. Peter or St. Paul, or those of Jupiter, Saturn, or Mercury, they are all dead, and are therefore now neither gods, nor apostles, nor men. If you worship Peter or Paul, you may have changed the name, but the error continues the same. If men must be adored, there would be less absurdity in adoring them when alive, while they are the image of God, than after they are dead, when they only resemble stocks and stones. And if we are not allowed to adore the works of God, much less are we allowed to adore the works of men. If the Cross of Christ ought to be adored, because he was nailed to it, for the same reason we ought to adore mangers, because he was laid in one; and swaddling-clothes, because he was wrapped in them." He goes on to mention other similar instances, and adds, "we have not been commanded to adore the cross, but to bear it, and to deny ourselves.—As to your assertion, that I speak against the going to Rome by way of penance, it is not true; I neither approve nor disapprove such pilgrimages; to some they are not useful, to others they are not prejudicial. It is a great perversion of the words, 'Thou art Peter,' &c. to infer from them, that eternal life is to be gained by a journey to Rome, and by the intercession of St. Peter.—The Apostolic, that is, the Pope, is not he, who fills the See of the Apostle, but he, who discharges its duties."

Such, says Fleury, were the errors of Claudius of Turin. He then tells us, that they were refuted by a recluse called Dungal. He gives us a few extracts from this writer, which it will be perfectly needless to recite; for, as Fleury owns, Dungal scarcely makes use of any arguments; and

* Fleury, [l. xlvii. c. 20.]

"in truth," continues he, "the main proofs in this matter have always been the tradition and constant usage of the Church." In the judgment of men who determine controversies which enter into the essence of Christianity by the Scriptures alone, the victory of Claudius in this dispute is decisive.

We are obliged, however, to Dungal, for the preservation of the extracts of the apology. In addition to the argumentative parts, there are also some pathetic exhortations interspersed in the work, which show the ardour of the bishop's mind, and the charitable zeal for divine truth and the salvation of souls, with which he was endowed. I shall present the reader with a few sentences.* "All these things are ridiculous, rather worthy of lamentation than of grave discussion; but we are obliged to describe them, in opposition to fools, and to declaim against those hearts of stone, whom the arrows and sentences of the Divine Word cannot pierce, and therefore we are under a necessity to assault them in this manner. Come to yourselves again, ye wretched transgressors: why are ye gone astray from the truth, and fallen in love with vanity? Why do you make the souls of multitudes the associates of devils, by the worship of idols, estranging them from their Creator, and precipitating them into everlasting damnation?—Return, ye blind, to your light.—Shall we not believe God, when he swears, that neither Noah, nor Daniel, nor Job † shall deliver son or daughter by their righteousness? For this end he makes the declaration, that none might put confidence [either in the merits or] in the intercession of saints.—Ye fools, who run to Rome, to seek there for the intercession of an Apostle, when will ye be wise? What would St. Augustine say of you, whom we have so often quoted?"

If the works of this great and good man had been published as faithfully as those of his adversaries, I doubt not but he would appear to us in a much more striking light than he can do from a few imperfect quotations. But his writings were either suppressed or secreted. The reign of idolatry had taken place, and the world worshipped the "BEAST." The labours, however, of Claudius, were not

* Allix. [p. 75, &c.]

† Ezek. xiv. [14.]

in vain. In his own diocese, at least, he checked th growing evil; and Romish writers have owned, that th valleys of Piedmont, which belonged to his bishopric, pr served his opinions in the ninth and tenth centurie Whence it is probable, that the Churches of the Walde ses were either derived, or at least received much increas and confirmation from his labours.

If we look, in an evangelical view, at the subject-matt of this bishop's preaching and expositions, it will appe that the controversy between him and his adversaries wa whether man shall be justified before God BY JESUS CHRI THROUGH FAITH ALONE, or whether he shall betake himse to OTHER REFUGES for the peace of his disquieted co science. What those other refuges may be, will muc depend on the customs and habits of the times in which man lives. In an age, like our own, of great civilization an refinement, they will, chiefly, be acts of humanity an kindness to the needy: in an age of superstition, they wi be ceremonial observances, and the whole apparatus WILL-WORSHIP.* Against the false reliefs of a burdene conscience, which the popedom exhibited, this first Prote tant reformer militated in much Christian zeal, and pointe out to his hearers and his readers the mediation of Jesu Christ, as the sole and all-sufficient object of dependenc With what success this was done among his people, w have no account: but, doubtless, so great a light was n set up in vain; and could I recite the effects of his labou in Piedmont, the account would in all probability be bot pleasing and profitable to evangelical minds. Let u see what further discoveries we can make of his spirit an views, from the extracts of his writings drawn from anoth of his adversaries.

This † was JONAS, BISHOP of ORLEANS. He wrot three books against Claudius, filled with invectives. H mentions, however, such reasonings made use of by h adversary, as it was not in his power to overturn, particu larly the authority of the second commandment, on whic hinge, indeed, the whole controversy turns, so far as it r lates to the worship of images. In regard to pilgrimag to Rome, Claudius observes, that the greater part, in co

* See Coloss. ii. [18—23.] † Centuariat. Magd. Cent. ix. [c. 5.]

sequence of them, become worse men than they were before. In opposing the popedom, he observes, that men, void of all spiritual understanding, misapplying those words of our Lord, "I will give unto thee the keys," &c.* ignorant men, setting aside all spiritual understanding, hope to obtain eternal life by making pilgrimages to Rome. Hence we see, that the power of the popedom was much founded on the misguided consciences of men. Persons distressed, on account of their sins, naturally catch at every support, which offers them relief. And, the true light of the Gospel of peace no longer shining, they availed themselves of the delusory consolations offered by the popedom; and thus, at once, gained a false peace, hardened themselves in real wickedness, and supported the grandeur of Antichrist. What a blessing is the real Gospel! It both consoles and sanctifies the sinner, and removes the most powerful incitements to superstition. But, to proceed with the words of Claudius. "It is not said, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind in heaven, shall be bound on earth.'—By this we should know, that the ministry of the bishops of the Church continue only so long as they remain upon earth. After they have left this world, it ceases: St Peter has no longer any influence in the government of the Church militant; and his successors exercise the office, so long as they live indeed, but no longer." †

Claudius for sixteen years, writes against the prevailing superstitions. Dies, A.D. 839.

From the year 823, Claudius wrote against the prevailing superstition, and lived to the year 839. That he was not put to death for confessing the real faith of Christ, seems to have been, under Providence, owing to the protection of the French court. The cause, which he espoused, was still, in part, supported in the western churches; and the Roman hierarchy was not yet able to establish idolatry in its full

* Matt. xvi. 19.

† I have added a word or two explanatory of the meaning, which, on account of the imperfection of the quotation, is sufficiently embarrassed. I apprehend, he is inferring from the real words of our Lord, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven," that St. Peter's episcopal acts terminated with his life; whereas, if it had been said, whatsoever thou shalt bind in heaven, shall be bound on earth, some countenance might seem to be given to the idea of the continuance of his power on earth, in the persons of his successors. Cent. Magd. Cent. ix. 118. [c. 5. de Hæresibus.]

extent, and to punish all its opposers. It is proper to add, that even the adversaries of Claudius did not insist on the worship of images; they only asserted that they were innocent and useful. So far were the decrees of the papacy from being owned as decisive, through Europe. At the same time, it must be confessed, that the middle path, which first had the sanction of Gregory, and was afterwards confirmed by the Caroline books and the council of Frankfort, naturally paved the way for the gradual establishment of idolatry.

CHAP. IV.

THE CASE OF GOTTESCHALCUS.

THE subject of predestination and grace had been formerly controverted in the churches of France with a considerable degree of acuteness and ingenuity, and what is still more pleasing to a Christian mind, with seriousness, candour, and charity.* We have seen with what zeal the doctrine of divine grace had been defended and illustrated by the followers of Augustine, and what a salutary influence had attended that doctrine on the knowledge, the spirit, and the lives of Christians. It has appeared also, that many who, partly through an ill-grounded fear of pernicious consequences, and partly through a misunderstanding of the nature of the subject, were averse to the sentiments of Augustine, did still sincerely abhor Pelagianism, and with a happy inconsistency, lived humbly dependent on divine grace alone, though in words they maintained Semi-Pelagianism. But, as superstition, idolatry, and ignorance increased, the truly evangelical views of Augustine were more and more thrown into the shade, and the case of Gotteschalcus showed, that it was now no longer permitted to a divine to promulge the sentiments of the bishop of Hippo with impunity.

Gotteschalcus was born in Germany: from early life he had been a monk; and had devoted himself to theological inquiries. He was peculiarly fond of the writings of Augus-

* See p. 322.

tine, and entered with much zeal into his sentiments.* That he really held the doctrines of that father seems evident from the account which is transmitted to us, though it is but scanty. He expressly owned, that the wicked were condemned for their own demerits. If he was charged with making God the author of sin, it was no more than what befel the bishop of Hippo; and Fleury himself owns, that he was misrepresented by his adversaries. The most culpable thing which I find in him, if indeed a certain confession of faith, ascribed to him, be genuine, is this, that he offered to undergo a trial by fire, on this condition, that if he was preserved unhurt, his doctrine should be allowed to be divine. If he was really guilty of this enthusiastic presumption, the issue of the persecution which he afterwards underwent, was calculated to humble him, and cause him to learn more practically than he had ever done, the real power of those doctrines for which he honestly suffered.

About the year 846, he left his monastery, and went into Dalmatia and Pannonia, where he spread the doctrines of Augustine, under a pretence, it was said by his enemies, of preaching the Gospel to the infidels. At his return, he remained some time in Lombardy, and in 847, he held a conference with Notingus, bishop of Vienne, concerning predestination. His zeal gave offence to the bishop, who prevailed on Rabanus, the archbishop of Mentz, to undertake the confutation of the novel heresy, as it was now decreed. Rabanus calumniated Gotteschalcus with those monstrous and licentious consequences, with which the doctrines of divine grace have in all ages been aspersed, and from which St. Paul himself was not exempted: and having dressed the sentiments of his adversary in the most odious colours, he found it no hard task to expose him to infamy. The learned monk undertook to defend himself in writing, and proposed the subject to the consideration of the most able

Gotteschalcus travels into Dalmatia and Pannonia, A.D. 846.

* I have extracted the best account of this person which I could from Fleury and Dupin, both Roman Catholic writers: I have availed myself also of the remarks of Mosheim. From the writings of the Magdeburgensian Centuriators, where I might have expected the most equitable and the most just account, I could collect nothing. They handle the subject briefly and confusedly, and join with the enemies of Gotteschalcus in condemning him, without affording their readers any proper materials, on which they might form a judgment for themselves.

men of his time; and, against the great credit and authority of his adversary, he opposed the renowned name of Augustine. But no cause ever appeared with more disadvantage in our times than that of Gotteschalcus. For we have not his treatise, composed against Rabanus; only some fragments of it have been preserved to us, by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, who, the reader will soon be convinced, was not a man fit to be trusted with the care of his reputation. In a synod held at Mentz, Gotteschalcus was condemned; and Rabanus, observing that he was of the diocese of Soissons, which was subject to the archbishop of Rheims, sent him to Hincmar, calling him a vagabond, and declaring that he had seduced several persons, who were become less careful of their salvation, since they had learned from Gotteschalcus to say, Why should I labour for my salvation? If I am predestinated to damnation, I cannot avoid it; and, on the contrary, if I am predestinated to salvation, whatever sins I am guilty of, I shall certainly be saved.*

Gotteschalcus condemned in the synod of Mentz, A.D. 848.

Hincmar entered fully into the views of Rabanus; and, in a council of bishops, examined Gotteschalcus, who still maintained his doctrine with firmness. On this account he was condemned as a heretic, degraded from the priesthood, and ordered to be beaten with rods and imprisoned. As nothing, however, was proved against him, except his adherence to the sentiments of Augustine, which were still held in estimation in the Church, this shows, says Du Pin, that he was an injured man.

And now the presumptuous boasts of Gotteschalcus, if they were his boasts indeed, met with an humiliating check. For, while he was whipped in the presence of the Emperor Charles and the bishops with great severity, and was given to understand that he must cast into the fire with his own hand a writing, in which he had made a collection of Scripture-texts, in order to prove his opinion, he, at length, overpowered by his sufferings, dropped the book into the flames;

* It is evident, that such reasoning as this, might, with equal plausibility, be alleged against the doctrine of the ixth. Chap. to the Romans. Whoever would see this subject sifted to the bottom, may consult Edwards's admirable treatise on Freewill, where he will find the vulgar objections proved, I think, irrefragably, to be fallacious. In the Analogy of Bishop Butler also (Chap. vi. Part 1. of the Opinion of Necessity) he will meet with some excellent observations.

after which he was kept close prisoner by Hincmar, in a monastery. This method of convincing a heretic of his error, seems, however, to have been by no means satisfactory to him who had made use of it. For Hincmar still took pains to persuade Gotteschalcus to retract his sentiments, but in vain. The injured pastor maintained, with his last breath, the doctrine for which he suffered, and died in prison in the year 870.*

Gotteschalcus dies in prison, A.D. 870.

Hincmar hearing that he lay at the point of death, sent him a formulary, which he was to subscribe, in order to his being received into the communion of the Church. Gotteschalcus rejected the offer with indignation. He refused to retract to the last; and was denied Christian burial, by the orders of Hincmar.

This is all that I can find material concerning Gotteschalcus. That he was an humble and sincere follower of Christ in the main, will scarce be doubted by those who make a fair estimate of his constancy in suffering, and at the same time reflect, that no moral turpitude is affixed to his memory. Even in that age there wanted not men, who remonstrated loudly against the barbarity with which he had been treated. Remigius, archbishop of Lyons, distinguished himself among these; and, in a council held at Valence, in Dauphiny, in the year 855, both Gotteschalcus and his doctrine were vindicated and defended. Two subsequent councils confirmed the decrees of this council. The Churches of Lyons, Vienne, and Arles, formerly renowned for piety, vigorously supported the sentiments of Gotteschalcus; and it was apparent, that all relish for the doctrines of grace was not lost in the Church. It is very extraordinary, that the cause of Gotteschalcus should prove, in the end, victorious, while he himself remained under the power of persecution. But the great secular influence of Hincmar, who for near forty years presided at Rheims, and made himself highly useful to kings and princes, seems to account for this.

Gotteschalcus's opinions supported at the council of Valence, A.D. 855.

It would be uninteresting to detail an account of the writings on both sides, which were published on the occasion of this controversy. One lesson the case before us is

* Cave.

peculiarly calculated to teach, namely, not to condemn any person for consequences which others may draw from his doctrine, and which he himself both speculatively and practically disavows.* This injustice was never more flagrantly committed, than in the transactions which we have briefly reviewed. Of Hincmar, much information indeed is left us in ecclesiastical story; but I do not seem to have any more employment for him in this work, than I have for the princes of France and Germany of that period. It is not hard to form, on the whole, some estimate of the state of religion at that time in France. The spirit of Christianity was much decayed; but there were, doubtless, a number of persons, to whom Christ and his grace were precious: and the influence of evangelical truth was still so strong that all the cruelty, activity, and artifice of Hincmar, one of the most subtile politicians of that age, were not able to extirpate it.

CHAP. V.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

In this century the Churches of the East and West, through the pride and ambition of the pontiffs of Rome and Constantinople, began to be separated from one another. Of such a division, which makes a great noise in what is commonly called ecclesiastical history, it is sufficient for an historian of the Church of Christ to say, that the wound, after repeated attempts, was never healed. Both the East and the West, indeed, were full of idolatry and darkness, and seemed to vie with each other in supporting the kingdom of Satan. Providence, however, made use of the ambitious spirit of the prelates for the still more extensive propagation of the Gospel. In this chapter I shall collect the information upon this subject, which may be extracted from an enormous mass of ecclesiastical rubbish; and, at the same time, shall lay before my readers some evidences of the progress of the good work, among the nations, which had been, in part, evangelized in the two last centuries.

Constantine, afterwards called Cyril, was born at Thes-

* See Burnet's Exposition of xxxix. Articles, Preface, p. 8, 9.—And Article 17. p. 166. Fol. Edit.

salonica, of a Roman family, and was educated at Constantinople. In 846, the famous Photius, who, by much iniquity, at length obtained the bishopric of Constantinople, envying Ignatius, at that time bishop, contended, in opposition to him, that every man had two souls. Being reproved by Cyril, he said, that he meant not to hurt any one, but only to try the logical abilities of Ignatius. "You have thrown your darts into the crowd," said Cyril, "yet pretend that none will be hurt. How keen soever the eyes of your wisdom be, they are blinded by the smoke of avarice and envy. Your passion against Ignatius has deceived you." Cyril indeed seems to have been as much superior to Photius * in piety, as he was his inferior in learning: he became one of the most active and useful missionaries of this century; and Providence opened to him a door of solid utility among the idolatrous nations.†

Photius disputes with Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, A.D. 846.

The Bulgarians were a barbarous and savage people, whose neighbourhood had long been troublesome to the Greek emperors. The sister of their king Bogoris, having been taken captive in a military incursion, was brought to Constantinople, and there adopted Christianity. Upon her redemption and return to her own country, she gave a strong evidence, that her change of religion had been more than nominal. She was struck with grief and compassion, to see the king, her brother, enslaved to idolatry, and she used the most cogent arguments in her power, in order to convince him of the vanity of his worship. Bogoris was affected with her arguments; but was not prevailed upon to receive the Gospel, till, a famine and a plague appearing in Bulgaria, she persuaded him to pray to the God of the Christians. He did so, and the plague ceased. There was something so remarkable in the event, that Bogoris was induced to send for missionaries to Constantinople; and at length received baptism, together with many of his people.‡ Cyril and his devout brother Methodius, were the instruments of these blessings to the Bulgarians. Bogoris had desired Methodius to draw him a picture. Methodius chose for his subject the last judgment, and explained it.

* Photius himself became patriarch of Constantinople about A.D. 857.

† See Alban Butler, Vol. xii. [Dec. 22.]

‡ Porphyrogenneta.

Bogoris is baptized. A.D. 861.

This is supposed to have induced the king to receive baptism. The event happened about the year 861.* That same pope Nicolas, who so warmly applauded the sanguinary exploits of the empress Theodora against the Paulicians, rejoiced at the opportunity, which this religious change among the Bulgarians afforded him, of extending his influence. He sent bishops, who preached and baptized throughout the country: and Bogoris sent his son to Rome, with many Lords: he consulted the pope on a variety of subjects, and entreated him to send pastors into Bulgaria. Nicolas rejoiced, says Fleury,† not only on account of the conversion of the Bulgarians, but the more, because they came so far to seek instruction from the Holy See. They had, however, though attended with many superstitions, the word of God, and the name of Christ introduced among them. The Saviour, in some sense, was preached, notwithstanding that pride and sinister motives predominated altogether in the Roman See; and St. Paul, in such a case, would have said, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."‡ Nor is there any reason to believe, that all the missionaries would be no less corrupt than the pope: on the contrary, we cannot doubt but the word was not preached altogether in vain. These transactions took place about the year 866.

Successes of the missionaries, A.D. 866.

About the same time Cyril, and his brother Methodius, missionaries among the Bulgarians, laboured also among the Sclavonians and the Chazari.§ These people lived on the banks of the Danube, and begged the emperor Michael III. and his mother Theodora, to send them some instructors. Cyril and his brother Methodius were sent to preach to them. The Cham and his whole nation were baptized: and Cyril gave a noble proof of his disinterestedness in refusing those presents, which the munificence of the prince would have heaped upon him. ‖

Cyril arriving at Chersona, continued there some time, to learn the language of the Chazari; which is supposed to have been the Sclavonian tongue, because it is certain that Constantine translated the sacred Books into that language.

* See Alban Butler, Vol. xii. [Dec. 22.]
† Fleury, b. l. [c. 49.]
‡ Philipp. i. 18.
§ Fleury, b. l. c. 54.
‖ Alban Butler, Vol. xii. [Dec 22.]

And as the people had not then the use of letters, he invented an alphabet for their use, and was very successful in teaching Christianity among the Chazari. He made the greater impression on their minds, because of the unquestionable proofs which he gave them of his disinterestedness. After this, Bartilas, prince of Moravia, understanding what had been done among the Chazari, desired the Greek emperor Michael to send some missionaries to instruct his people likewise in Christianity. Michael sent the same Constantine and Methodius, who carried with them the same Sclavonian Gospel, taught the children the letters which they had invented, laboured in their mission, and instructed the people four years and a half.

The king of Moravia was baptized with many of his subjects. Cyril died a monk: Methodius was consecrated bishop of Moravia. The Sclavonian tongue, said to have been invented by these two missionaries, is, to this day, used in the liturgy of the Moravians. Complaint was made to Pope John VIII. of the novelty of worshipping in a barbarous tongue; but he condescended to own himself satisfied with the reasons assigned by the missionaries. Bogoris, king of Bulgaria, gave up his crown about the year 880, and retired into a monastery. Methodius, after a long course of labours, died in an advanced age.*

Bogoris resigns his crown, A.D. 880.

These were noble works, and some divine unction, amidst all the superstitions, no doubt, attended them. In the mean time, Nicolas of Rome, and Photius of Constantinople, two of the proudest men of any age, were acrimoniously inveighing against one another, and striving each to secure to himself the obedience of the new converts. There is reason to hope that the missionaries themselves were of a better spirit: and if I had materials of their transactions before me, I would with pleasure present them to the reader; but the squabbles of the prelates themselves for ecclesiastical dominion, and the effects of those squabbles, are scarcely worth his attention.

It appears from one of the invectives of Photius, against Nicolas, that the Russians, hitherto barbarous and savage, had received a Christian bishop, and were then under in-

* Alb. But. Vol. xii. [Dec. 22.]

Provinces of Dalmatia solicit missionaries, A.D. 867.

struction. Also, about the year 867, certain provinces of Dalmatia sent an embassy to Constantinople, imploring the emperor Basilius to supply them with Christian teachers. Their request was granted, and the pale of the Church was extended throughout those provinces.*

If we turn our eyes toward the countries which had been evangelized in the last century, we may discern some traces of the spirit of godliness still remaining among them. Length of time, under the influence of natural depravity, had not, as yet, destroyed all the seeds of that divine simplicity, which, as we have had repeated occasion to observe, is always the most pure in the infancy of religion. Frederic of Devonshire, nephew to Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, so renowned in the last century, was appointed bishop of Utrecht; and dining with the emperor, Lewis the Meek, was exhorted by him to discharge his office with faithfulness and integrity. The bishop, pointing to a fish on the table, asked whether it was proper to take hold of it by the head or by the tail. "By the head, to be sure," replied the emperor. "Then I must begin my career of faithfulness," answered Frederic, "with your majesty." He proceeded to rebuke the emperor for an incestuous connexion which he openly maintained with Judith the empress; and, in the spirit of John the Baptist, told him, "that it was not lawful for him to have her." Lewis had not expected this rebuke; and, like Herod, was not disposed to give up his Herodias. No sooner did the empress hear of this rebuke, than, in the true temper of an incensed adulteress, she began to plot the destruction of Frederic; and, by the help of assassins, she at length effected it. Frederic being mortally wounded, insisted, however, that no blood should be shed on his account; and died in a spirit of martyrdom worthy of the relation of Boniface.

Murder of the bishop of Utrecht, A. D. 833.

In him the Hollanders lost a faithful prelate; but his death would preach a salutary doctrine among them.—Frederic was murdered about the year 833.†

Haymo, a monk of Fulda, a scholar of Alcuin,‡ was

* Porphyrogen. See Mosheim, Chap. i. Cent. ix. [P. 1. Sect. 4.]

† See Collier's Ecc. Hist. 1. Vol. [p. 154. W. Malmesb. de gest. Pont. Angl. Lib. i. p. 199.]

‡ Du Pin, Cent. ix. [c. 15.]

chosen bishop of Halberstadt in Saxony, in the year 841. He was by descent an Englishman, a relation of Bede, and took much pains in preaching to the people. His writings are voluminous, but the matter of them is chiefly extracted from the fathers. He assisted in the condemnation of Gotteschalcus at Mentz; nor is it hard to conceive, that a pious person might be deceived by the elaborate misrepresentations of Rabanus: though I should think it very improbable, that Haymo would be at all concerned in the barbarities afterwards exercised on the supposed heretic at Rheims. For Haymo seems to have thought and written on the doctrines of grace with more unction and vigour than most of his contemporaries. He composed comments on many parts of the Holy Scriptures. A few specimens may serve to show what sort of doctrine was then preached to the recent Churches of Germany.

Haymo elected bishop of Halberstadt, A. D. 841.

"By * the book of life, we ought to understand the divine predestination, as it is written, The Lord knoweth them that are his." [Lib. i. c. 3. in Apoc.]

"Man of himself departing from God returns not of himself to God.—God works all in all; by which words human arrogance is removed, since without the Holy Spirit our weakness can effect no real good, whether great or small." † [In 1 Cor. c. 12.]

"We are not only unable to perfect any good, without divine grace and mercy, preceding and following us, but not even to think any. For the grace of God prevents us, that we may be willing, and follows us, that we may be able.—Every good thing that we have, the good will, and the good work, is not from ourselves, but from God." [In 2 Cor. c. 3.] [In Phil. c. 2.]

His views of the distinction between the law and the Gospel, a subject in his time very little understood, have a considerable degree of perspicuity. "In the law, no room is reserved for repentance, but its language is, the soul that sinneth shall die. The Gospel saith, I will not the death of a sinner.—The Law is not of faith.‡ It is the province of faith to believe and to hope [In Cantic. Canticorum.]

* Magd. Cent. ix. c. 4. p. 52. [de prædest.] † Id. p. 60. [de non renato.]
‡ Galatians, iii. 12.

[In Gal. c. 3.] things invisible. The law therefore is not fulfilled by faith, but by works. But the Gospel is fulfilled by faith rather than by works; for faith alone saves!" * Precious sentiments! well understood by serious and humble spirits, coming to Christ for rest, who find themselves by the law debarred of all hope of salvation, because of their consciousness of entire depravity. It is not necessary to give distinct quotations, in order to prove that Haymo had the same imperfect and inaccurate views of justification which we have observed in Augustine.

"The faith, by which we believe in God, is given by [In 1 Cor. c. 16.] the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: it is not in man naturally, it is given by God; for, if it were in us, by nature, all would have it.—Faith, remission of sins, and all the gifts of God, are freely given to believers." †

Does it not appear a cruel thing to disfigure such lovely pictures of evangelical truth? But historical veracity is a stubborn thing. This same Haymo, who knew so much of Christ, was so infected with the growth of idolatrous superstition, that, in an homily concerning virgins, he says, "it is highly fitting that we supplicate her,"—he means some virgin, whose festival he was then celebrating,—"with devout prayers, that she make us comfortable in this life by her merits and prayers, and in the next, acceptable to God." ‡ How inconsistent are these sentiments with his avowed faith in the Mediator! But such was the torrent of the times! —I see Germany, which had been happily tutored in the infant simplicity of Christian faith, gradually perverted by the idolatry which derived its strength from the papal dominion. Haymo, however, most probably did not mean what he said, in the full import of his own words; and he seems to have felt so sincerely the spirit of Gospel-truth, that I am tempted to suppose, that his homilies were interpolated by what are called PIOUS FRAUDS, the introduction of which became a common practice in the dark ages.

[In Hom. de Virg. super Christi Paral. de Margaritâ. Matt. c. 13.]

Haymo continued bishop of Halberstadt for twelve years, and died in 853. A rare light, which shone in the midst of darkness!

Haymo dies, A.D. 853.

* Magd. 64. [de Evangelio.] † Magd. p. 67. [de fide.]
‡ Magd. p. 111. [de Sanctis.]

We have seen some evidences of the power of Christian truth, in this century, among the recent Churches of Germany and Holland. Let us now look to the north of Europe, and see by what gradations Divine Providence paved the way for the propagation of the Gospel in the frozen regions of Scandinavia,* and on the shores of the Baltic, which had hitherto been enveloped in the most deplorable darkness of paganism.

Adelard, cousin-german to Charlemagne, was a bright luminary in the Christian world at the beginning of this century. He had been invited to the court in his youth: but fearing the infection of such a mode of life, he had retired; and, at the age of twenty years became a monk of Corbie, in Picardy,† and was at length chosen abbot of the monastery. His imperial relation, however, forced him again to attend the court, where he still preserved the dispositions of a recluse, and took every opportunity, which business allowed, for private prayer and meditation. After the death of Charlemagne he was, on unjust suspicions, banished by Lewis the Meek, to a monastery on the coast of Aquitain, in the isle of Hiere. After a banishment of five years, Lewis, sensible at length of his own injustice, recalled Adelard, and heaped on him the highest honours. The monk was, however, the same man in prosperity and in adversity, and in 823 obtained leave to return to his Corbie. Every week he addressed each of the monks in particular: he exhorted them in pathetic discourses; and laboured for the spiritual good of the country around his monastery. His liberality seems to have bordered on excess: his humility induced him to receive advice from the meanest monk: when he was desired to live less austerely, he would frequently say, I will take care of your servant, that he may be enabled to attend on you the longer. Another Adelard, who had governed the monastery during his banishment, by the direction of the first Adelard, prepared the foundation of a distinct monastery, called new Corbie, near Paderborn, beside the Weser, as a nursery for evangelical labourers, who should instruct

Adelard, a Monk of Corbie, in Picardy, a shining character.

He returns to Corbie, A.D. 823.

* This term commonly includes the three kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

† A. Butler, Vol. i. [January 2.]

the northern nations. The first Adelard completed the scheme: went himself to new Corbie twice; and settled its discipline. The success of this truly charitable project was great: many learned and zealous missionaries were furnished from the new seminary: and it became a light to the north of Europe. Adelard promoted learning in his monasteries: instructed the people both in Latin and French; and, after his second return from Germany to old Corbie, he died in 827, aged 73.

Dies, A.D. 827.

Such is the account given us of Adelard, a character, there is reason to believe, of eminent piety. The fruits of his faithful labours appear to have been still greater after his death than during his life. To convert monasteries into seminaries of pastoral education was a thought far above the taste of the age in which he lived; and tended to emancipate those superstitious institutions from the unprofitable and illiberal bondage in which they had subsisted for many generations.

In * the year 814, Harold, king of Denmark, being expelled from his dominions, implored the protection of the emperor Lewis, the son and successor of Charlemagne. That prince persuaded him to receive Christian baptism; and foreseeing that Harold's reception of Christianity would increase the difficulty of his restoration, he gave him a district in Friezeland for his present maintenance. Lewis, dismissing Harold to his own country, inquired after some pious person, who might accompany him, and confirm both the king and his attendants in the Christian religion. But it was not easy to find a man disposed to undertake such a journey. At length Vala, abbot of old Corbie, who had succeeded his brother Adelard, whose history we have just considered, said to the emperor, "I have, in my monastery, a monk, who earnestly wishes to suffer for the sake of Christ; a man of understanding and integrity, and peculiarly fitted for such a work. But I cannot promise, that he will undertake the journey." The emperor ordered him to send for the man; Anscarius was his name. When the nature

Expulsion of Harold, king of Denmark, A.D. 814.

* I have extracted the subsequent account of Anscarius from various parts of Fleury, in his history of the ixth century; not without an attention also to the history of the same missionary in Alban Butler, and in the Centur. Magd.

of the employment was opened to the monk, he professed his readiness to go. "I by no means command you, said Vala, to enter on so difficult and dangerous a service; I leave it to your option." Anscarius, however, persisted in his resolution: it was matter of surprise to many, that he should choose to expose himself among strangers, barbarians, and pagans; much pains were taken by many to dissuade him; but in vain: while preparations were making for his departure, he gave himself up to reading and prayer. This excellent monk had been employed as a teacher, both in old and new Corbie, and had distinguished himself by his talents and virtues. Aubert, a monk of noble birth, a great confident of Vala, and steward of his house, offered himself as a companion to Anscarius. Harold, with the two strangers, proceeded on his journey; but neither he nor his attendants, rude and barbarous in their manners, were at all solicitous for the accommodation of the missionaries, who therefore suffered much in the beginning of their journey. When the company arrived at Cologne, Hedebald the archbishop, commiserating the two strangers, gave them a bark, in which they might convey their effects. Harold, struck with the convenience of the accommodation, entered into the vessel with the missionaries; and they went down the Rhine into the sea, and came to the frontiers of Denmark. But Harold finding access to his dominions impossible, because of the power of those who had usurped the sovereignty, remained in Friezeland, in the district assigned to him by the emperor.

This king of Denmark seems to have been appointed by Divine Providence, only as an instrument to introduce Anscarius into the mission. For we hear little more of him afterwards. The two French monks laboured with zeal and success in Friezeland, both among Christians and Pagans. Harold sent some of his own slaves to be taught by them; and in a little time they had above twelve children in their school. Above two years they laboured, and were made instruments of good to souls: after this, Aubert ended his days by a disease.

About the year 829, many Swedes having expressed a desire to be instructed in Christianity, Anscarius received a commission from the emperor Lewis to visit Sweden.

Anscarius commissioned to visit Sweden, A.D. 829.

Another monk of old Corbie, Vitmar by name, was assigned as his companion; and a pastor was left to attend on king Harold, in the room of Anscarius. In the passage, the two missionaries were met by pirates, who took the ship and all its effects. On this occasion, Anscarius lost the emperor's presents, and forty volumes, which he had collected for the use of the ministry. But his mind was still determined: and he and his partner having with difficulty got to land, they gave themselves up to the direction of Providence, and walked on foot a long way, now and then crossing some arms of the sea in boats. Such are the triumphs of Christian faith and love. They arrived at Birca, from the ruins of which, Stockholm took its rise, though built at some distance from it.* The king of Sweden received them favourably; and his council unanimously agreed to permit them to remain in the country, and to preach the Gospel. Success attended their pious efforts. Many Christian captives in Sweden rejoiced at the opportunity of the communion of Saints which was now restored to them; and, among others, Herigarius, governor of the city, was baptized. This man erected a church on his own estate, and persevered in the profession and support of the Gospel.

After six months, the two missionaries returned with letters written by the king's own hand, into France, and informed Lewis of their success. The consequence was, that Anscarius was appointed archbishop of Hamburg. This great city, being in the neighbourhood of Denmark, was henceforth looked on as the metropolis of all the countries north of the Elbe which should embrace Christianity. The mission into Denmark was at the same time attended to; and Gausbert, a relation of Ebbo, archbishop of Rheims, who, as well as Anscarius, was concerned in these missions, was sent to reside as a bishop in Sweden: there the number of Christians increased. But perhaps the reader has anticipated the observation: namely, that it was the genius of these dark ages to provide for the hierarchy prematurely; and to constitute bishops and dioceses over large districts in which scarcely any Christians were to be found.

Anscarius—such was the ecclesiastical discipline of the

* Puffendorff's Hist. of Sweden.

times,—by the order of the emperor Lewis, went to Rome, that he might receive the confirmation of the new archbishopric of Hamburg. Returning to the diocese, he gained over many Pagans, brought up children in the Christian faith, and redeemed captives, whom he instructed and employed in the ministry. In the year 845, his faith was tried by a severe affliction. Hamburg was besieged, taken, and pillaged by the Normans, and he himself escaped with difficulty. On this occasion, he lost all his effects: but his mind was so serene, that he was not heard to complain: "The Lord gave," said he, "and the Lord hath taken away." It was no inconsiderable addition to his sufferings, to hear, that Gausbert, whom he had sent into Sweden, was banished through a popular insurrection; in consequence of which, the work of the ministry was for some years at a stand in that country. Anscarius, reduced to great poverty, and deserted by many of his followers, persisted still with unwearied patience in the exercise of his mission in the north of Europe, till the bishopric of Bremen was conferred upon him. Hamburg and Bremen were from that time considered as united in one diocese. It was not till some pains were taken to overcome his scruples, that he could be prevailed on to accept of this provision for his wants. About the year 852, Anscarius sent a priest, called Ardgarius, into Sweden, to strengthen the faith of the few Christians who remained there. Among these, was Herigarius, who had supported the cause of Christ, while it was in the most feeble and afflicted state.

Further account of Anscarius, and of the taking of Hamburg, A.D. 845.

Anscarius sends a Christian teacher into Sweden, A.D. 852.

Though Anscarius had made no great impression on Sweden, he was not discouraged in his views of propagating the faith in the north. He still had his eye on Denmark, which had been his first object: and having gained the friendship of Eric, who reigned there, he was enabled to gain a footing in that country; and to plant the Gospel with some success at Sleswick, a port then much frequented by merchants. Many persons, who had been baptized at Hamburg, resided there; and a number of Pagans were induced to countenance Christianity in some degree. Anscarius, through the friendship of Eric, found means also to

visit Sweden once more. A recommendatory letter from that prince to Olaus, king of Sweden, ensured him a favourable reception in the last-mentioned country. The zealous bishop arrived at Birca, where a Pagan, who pretended to intimacy with the gods, opposed his designs with arguments adapted to the superstitious notions of the people. Olaus himself informed Anscarius, that it must be decided by lot, whether he should be permitted to preach Christianity in Sweden. The missionary prayed, and the lot decided in favour of his designs. The profession of the Gospel was established at Birca, and Christianity made a great progress in Sweden. Anscarius returned into Denmark, and laboured there with success. The missionaries, whom he employed, were directed by him to follow the example of St. Paul, by labouring with their own hands for bread; a very necessary practice in those poor countries.

The excellent Anscarius dies, A.D. 865.

In the year 865, this Apostle of the north was called to his rest. He had lived six years after the union of the dioceses of Hamburg and Bremen, and had applied himself to the duties of his office, both as a governor and a preacher of the church, with indefatigable assiduity. A terror to the proud, and a comfort to the humble, he knew how to divide the word of truth, and to give to each of the flock his portion in due season. In all good works, and particularly in his care of redeeming captives, he was eminently distinguished. He erected a hospital at Bremen, in which passengers were relieved, and the sick were taken care of, which, in that rude age, was an uncommon instance of liberality and compassion. His example and authority had great influence even among those who sold captives to Pagans, or kept them in slavery. They were induced by his exhortations to set the prisoners at liberty. He is said to have had the gift of miracles; and though I cannot give full credit even to the most plausible stories of this nature, which are related of him, because of the superstitious credulity and fraudulent inventions of the times, I must confess with Fleury,* that if ever the gift of miracles may be supposed to have existed after the first ages of Christianity, it may be believed, most probably, to have been vouchsafed to those,

* [Fleury, l. xlix. c. 19.]

who were concerned in the first plantation of Churches.* And it should be remembered, that Sweden and Denmark were, under God, indebted to Anscarius for the first light of the Gospel. This extraordinary person, however, was by no means disposed to value himself on miraculous powers; as he appears to have been acquainted with a holy influence of a more excellent nature, 1 Cor. chap. xii. last verse. "If I had found favour with God," said he, one day, when he heard his miracles extolled, "I should beseech him to grant me one single miracle, even his grace to sanctify my nature." It is remarked of him, that he never did any thing without recommending himself first to God by prayer. A short fragment of an epistle to the bishops is the whole of his writings which I can find to be extant.† "I beg your earnest prayers to God for the growth and fruitfulness of this mission among the Pagans. For, by the grace of God, the Church of Christ is now founded both in Denmark and Sweden; and the pastors discharge their office without molestation. May God Almighty make you all partakers of this work of godly charity, and joint heirs with Christ in heavenly glory!" The Centuriators have charged him with idolatry; but the only proof, which they give, is his superstitious attachment to relics: an evil so general, I had almost said UNIVERSAL, at that time, that it cannot fix any particular blot on the character of Anscarius. I see no proof of his having practised or encouraged image-worship. It is true, that he was devoted to the See of Rome. And in those days, how few were not so! The Centuriators, in their own attachment to the prejudices of the age in which they lived, might have found a charitable apology for those of the northern Apostle. If candour be not exercised in such circumstances, we shall scarcely be able to see, for many ages, even the existence of a Church of Christ. A Luther, firmly and decidedly resisting, and

* Nelson is of the same opinion. "Q. Does it seem probable, that if the conversion of infidels were attempted by men of honest and sincere minds, God would extraordinarily countenance such a design? A. 'Tis agreeable to reason to think he would, and in no way contrary to Scripture. For, as the wisdom of God is never found to be prodigal in multiplying the effects of his Almighty power, so it is never wanting to afford all necessary evidences and motives of conversion." Nelson's Festivals, p. 259.

† Crantzius. See Cent. Magd. Cent. ix. [c. 10.] p. 324.

even despising the current maxims of his own age, is a rare phenomenon.

I have the satisfaction to observe, that Mosheim is, in the case of Anscarius, more candid than the Centuriators. He allows, that the labours of that missionary, and in general of the other missionaries in this century, deserve the highest commendations. If it were possible to exhibit a circumstantial account of Anscarius, most probably the justice of Mosheim's encomium on his character would be ascertained beyond the reach of contradiction. What else but the genuine love of God in Christ could have furnished the mind with such faith in Providence, perseverance in hardships, and active charity for souls?

Rembert made bishop of Bremen.

Rembert, his confidant, was appointed bishop of Bremen, by the dying words of the Apostle. He wrote the life of his predecessor, a treatise which seems to have furnished historians with the greatest part of their materials concerning Anscarius. Rembert himself presided over the Church of the north, for twenty-three years, and established their discipline and ecclesiastical consistence. He was not unworthy of the confidence of his predecessor, and lived and died an example of piety. He began to preach among the people of Brandenburg, who hitherto had been altogether pagan, and made some progress toward their conversion. He died in 888.

Dies, A.D. 888.

Jeron, an English missionary, martyred in Holland, A.D. 849.

Jeron, an English Presbyter, went over to Holland, in this century, and preached the Gospel there: and, so far as appears, with faithfulness. He was crowned with martyrdom about the year 849.*

Patto, a Scotch abbot, was appointed bishop of Verden, by Charlemagne. The Conturiators † only tell us, that he strenuously supported popish corruptions and human traditions. But Crantzius, from whom they collected this account, would have informed them also of better things.

Tanco, a Scotch abbot, murdered, A.D. 815.

[Tanco, who had succeeded Patto in the Scotch abbey, after a time left his situation and followed his countryman into Germany: not so much with a desire of martyrdom, say the Centuriators,

* [Cent. Magd. Cent. ix. c. 10. p. 554.]

† Cent. Magd. [Cent ix. c. 10. p. 554. and 5.]

as of obtaining a richer benefice. Uncharitable surmise! there is too much of this leaven to be found in a work which in other respects abounds in piety and industry. The same Crantzius informs us, that Tanco laboured in conjunction with Patto, and after a while was appointed his successor to the See of Verden. He had great success among the infidels, but was grieved to see Christian professors disgracing the faith by their vices. He faithfully rebuked them, and for his honest zeal in preaching against the sins of nominal Christians, was murdered about the year 815.]* The considerate reader will judge, whether the sufferings and hardships which Tanco and Patto had sustained among barbarians were likely to render the bishopric of Verden an enviable object of ambition. †

Crantzius's account of Tanes.

I know no other ground on which the propagation of the Gospel may be discovered in this century. The accounts of the labours of Spanish pastors among the Mahometans, or of the sufferings of the Christians under the persecutions of the Moors, are not sufficiently authenticated.

The reader, however, has seen, in this dark century, a clear demonstration, that the Church of Christ still existed. He may now, if he please, descend with me to the ultimate point of Christian depression.

CENTURY X.

CHAP. I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE famous Annalist of the Roman Church, whose partiality to the See of Rome is notorious, has, however, the candour to own, that this was an iron age, barren of all goodness; a leaden age, abounding in all wickedness; and a dark age, remarkable above all others for the scarcity of

* See A. Butler, Vol. ii. [Feb. 16.]

† [There was much confusion in the account given by Milner of these two Missionaries, which was pointed out by Maitland in his letter to King, and which I have endeavoured to remove.]

writers, and men of learning.* "Christ was then, as it appears, in a very deep sleep, when the ship was covered with waves; and what seemed worse, when the Lord was thus asleep, there were no disciples, who by their cries, might awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep." Under an allusion by no means incongruous with the oriental and scriptural taste, this writer represents the Divine Head of the Church as having given up the Church, for its wickedness, to a judicial impenitency, which continued the longer, because there was scarcely any zealous spirits who had the charity to pray for the cause of God upon earth. I give this serious and devotional sense to Baronius, because the words will bear it without the least violence, and the phraseology is perfectly scriptural.†

Infidel malice has with pleasure recorded the vices and the crimes of the popes of this century. Nor is it my intention to attempt to palliate the account of their wickedness. It was as deep and as atrocious as language can paint; nor can a reasonable man desire more authentic evidence of history, than that, which the records both of civil and ecclesiastical history afford, concerning the corruption of the whole church. One pleasing circumstance, however, occurs to the mind of a genuine Christian; which is, that all this was predicted. The Book of the Revelation may justly be called a prophetic history of these transactions, and the truth of Scripture is vindicated by events of all others the most disagreeable to a pious mind.

What materials then appear for the history of the real Church? The propagation of the Gospel among the Pagan nations, and the review of some writers of this century, form the principal materials, and shall be the subjects of two distinct chapters. But the general description of the situation of the Church, can be little else than a very succinct enumeration of the means made use of to oppose the progress of popery.

A council at Frankfort, A.D. 909.

The decrees of the council of Frankfort against image-worship had still some influence in Germany, France, and England. In the year 909, a council was held at Trosle, a village near Soissons in

* Baron. Annal. [in Ann. 900.]

† As for instance, Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Ps. xliv. 23.

France, in which they expressed their sentiments of Christian faith and practice, without any mixture of doctrine that was peculiarly popish. Many Churches still had the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. The monks took much pains in our island to erect an independent dominion on the ruin of the secular clergy. This scheme, equally destructive of civil and clerical authority, met, however, with a vigorous, and, in a great measure, a successful resistance; and the celibacy of the clergy was strongly opposed. Even the doctrine of transubstantiation itself, the favourite child of Pascasius Radbert, was still denied by many, and could not as yet gain a firm and legal establishment in Europe. Alfric, in England, whose homily for Easter used to be read in the Churches, undertook to prove, that the elements were the body and blood of Christ, not corporeally, but spiritually. In an epistle he asserts, that this sacrifice is not made his body, in which he suffered for us, nor his blood, which he shed for us, but is spiritually made his body and blood, as was the case with the manna which rained from heaven, and with the water which flowed from the rock. Opposition was also made by kings and councils to the authority of the pope. One of the most remarkable instances of this kind took place in the council of Rheims, which deposed a bishop without the consent of the pope. The story is tedious and uninteresting. I have looked over the acts of the synod, which are circumstantially detailed by the Centuriators in their history of this century; and a few words of the discourses of Arnulph, bishop of Orleans, the president,* may deserve to be distinctly quoted.† "O deplorable Rome, who in the days of our forefathers producedst so many burning and shining lights, thou hast brought forth, in our times, only dismal darkness, worthy of the detestation of posterity—What shall we do, or what council shall we take? The Gospel tells us of a barren fig-tree, and of the divine patience exercised toward it. Let us bear with our primates as long as we can; and, in the

* [Seguinus Archbishop of Sens was President, but Arnulph conducted the proceedings as the most learned and eloquent person among them.]

† Bishop Newton, in his iiid. Vol. p. 161. [Diss. 24. c. 11.] on the Prophecies, of whom I have made some use in a few foregoing sentences, assigns the words to Gerbert, of Rheims. The acts of the synod which I have mentioned show his mistake; they expressly ascribe them to Arnulphus.

mean time, seek for spiritual food, where it is to be found. Certainly there are some in this holy assembly, who can testify, that in Belgium and Germany, both which are near us, there may be found real pastors and eminent men in religion. Far better would it be, if the animosities of kings did not prevent that we should seek, in those parts, for the judgment of bishops, than in that venal city, which weighs all decrees by the quantity of money. What think you, reverend fathers, of this man, the pope, placed on a lofty throne, shining in purple and gold? whom do you account him? If destitute of love, and puffed up with the pride of knowledge only, he is Antichrist sitting in the temple of God."*

It is always a pleasing speculation to a thinking mind, to observe the ebullitions of good sense, and a vigorous understanding, exerted in disadvantageous circumstances. It should be still more pleasing to observe them, when they are under the conduct of humble piety, as it may be presumed was the case in this instance of Arnulphus. We see here even Luther and Cranmer in embryo. This zealous and intelligent Frenchman laments, that the kings of the earth were committing fornication with the Roman harlot, and giving their power to support her grandeur. He cast his eyes toward the Netherlands and Germany, which appear to have had, at that time, a degree of light and purity unknown at Rome: he eagerly wishes to oppose this light and purity to the darkness and the profligacy of Rome. Like Luther, he is fearful of throwing all things into confusion by hasty and precipitate methods; and, like Cranmer, in the case of Henry VIII.'s divorce, he wishes to appeal to the unprejudiced judgment of men more learned and more virtuous, than any to be found at Rome, against the scandalous oppressions of that venal city. That which Arnulphus conceived so judiciously, in an age the most unfavourable to reformation, Luther in Germany, and Cranmer in England, afterwards affected. It is not, however, to be supposed, that even those magnanimous strug-

* 2 Thess. ii. 4. [Magd. Cent. x. c. 9. p. 487. the observations of this Prelate as given by the Centuriators are extended to some length, and are throughout sufficiently severe upon the assumptions of the Roman Pontiff and the then state of the Church at Rome. Milner has transposed the latter sentences.]

gles for Christian light and liberty were in vain. The Spirit of God was evidently still with the recent churches of Germany and the North; and France itself was by no means destitute of men who feared God, and served him in the Gospel of his Son.

There is an ultimate point of depression in morals, below which the common sense of mankind and the interests of society will not permit the scandalous profligacy of governors, whether secular or ecclesiastic, to descend. The Church of Rome had sunk to this point in the present century. Not only moral virtue itself, but even the appearance of it, was lost in the metropolis: and the Church, now trampled on by the most worthless prelates, and immersed in profaneness, sensuality, and lewdness, called for the healing aid of the civil magistrate. Otho I. emperor of Germany, came to Rome: and, by the united powers, of the civil and military sword, reduced that capital into some degree of order and decorum. He put an end to the irregular and infamous customs of intruding into the popedom, and confirmed to himself and his successors the right of choosing the supreme pontiff in future. The consequence was, that a greater degree of moral decorum began to prevail in the papacy, though matter of fact evinces but too plainly, that religious principle was still as much wanting as ever. The effect of Otho's regulations was, that the popes exchanged the vices of the rake and the debauchee, for those of the ambitious politician and the hypocrite; and gradually recovered, by a prudent conduct, the domineering ascendency, which had been lost by vicious excesses. But this did not begin to take place till the latter end of the eleventh century. If a very moderate degree of Christian knowledge had obtained, during Otho's time, in the Christian world, the farce of St. Peter's dominion at Rome by his successors, would have been at an end. But there arose no Claudius of Turin in this century. The little specimen of the eloquence of Arnulphus, which has been mentioned, was the only effort I can find, which was made to stem the torrent of Roman tyranny. The whole western world, with Otho at its head, an emperor of upright intentions, and of shining endowments, agreed to reverence that See as supreme, which had laboured as it were, by the most infamous

practices, to degrade itself, and to convince mankind, that it could not possibly be of divine appointment. The popes were rebuked, condemned, and punished; but the popedom was reverenced as much as ever. God had put in the hearts of princes to fulfil his will; and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the "Beast," until the words of God should be fulfilled.* The Roman prelates, convinced of the necessity of more caution and decorum in the use of their power, recovered by political artifice what they had lost, and became, in the issue, more terrible and more pernicious in the exercise of their power than ever. The neglect of so favourable an opportunity for emancipating the Church from religious slavery, is the highest proof of the extreme ignorance of these times, and deserved to be noticed.

This was an age of great political regulations. The choice of the German emperor was restricted to certain electors, with whom it continues to the present time. The empire had, indeed, been entirely separated from the French monarchy, in the latter end of the foregoing century. But, in this, the great Otho more firmly fixed the imperial crown, in the name and nation of Germany. He himself was sprung from the dukes of Saxony; and deserved much of all Europe for his memorable victory over the Turks, by which the same restraint was laid on their inroads into Germany, as had been laid in France on the inroads of the Saracens into that kingdom, by the victorious arms of Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne. The Turks were a fierce and valiant nation, who inhabited the coast of the Caspian sea, and who were let loose on mankind as a just providential scourge, on account of the contempt of divine truth, and the overflowing torrent of iniquity which had pervaded Christendom. They gradually superseded the Saracens, and seized their power and empire; but no great alteration took place in the civil situation of the East or the West on that account. For the Turks universally embraced Mahometanism, the religion of the vanquished; and with that the hatred of the Saracens to the Christian name; nor have they to this day acquired either politeness or science to such a degree as might mitigate their ferocity.

* Rev. xvii. 17.

In all this disastrous period, I find scarcely any prince, except Otho, actuated with a spirit of religious zeal: indeed, his two successors of the same name, inherited some portion of his talents and virtues. The efforts of Otho to purify the Church, to promote learning, to erect bishoprics, to endow churches, and to propagate the Gospel among the barbarous nations, were highly laudable. And so steady and sincere were his exertions of this nature, and so amiable was his private life, that I cannot but hope, that he was himself a real Christian. His empress, Adelaide, was no less remarkable for her zeal and liberality. But I scarcely need to say, that the reigning ignorance, superstition, and wickedness defeated, or abused their well-meant designs; those alone excepted, which regarded the propagation of the Gospel among the Pagans.

In the west the Normans, in the east the Turks, committed the most dreadful outrages on the Church. In our own island I find nothing, in all this period, but ignorance, superstition, and the ravages of northern barbarians. The state of France was not much different: the latter kings of the house of Charlemagne were dwindled into ciphers; and, toward the close of the century, the third race of French kings began in the person of Hugh Capet. This prince was himself by no means so renowned as Clovis and Charlemagne, the heads of the first and second race; but his posterity remained on the throne for a much longer series of years than that of the two former, though the name of Capet was almost forgotten in the world. It has, however, been rendered familiar to our ears of late, by a series of transactions, which have issued in the ruin of that house, and in the exhibition of scenes, which have equally outraged every principle of religion, honour, and humanity.

CHAP. II.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

THE Hungarians had received some ideas of Christianity in the time of Charlemagne.* But, on his decease, they relapsed into the idolatries of their fathers, and the Chris-

* [Cent. Magd. Cent. x. c. 2. p. 16.]

tian name was almost extinguished among them. Nor is it probable, that they had ever been much instructed in the real Gospel of Christ. But toward the middle of this century, two Hungarian chiefs, whose governments lay on the banks of the Danube, made profession of Christianity; and were baptized at Constantinople. These two leaders were called Bologudes and Gylas. The former soon apostatized: the latter persevered; received instruction from Hierotheus, a bishop, who had accompanied him from Constantinople; and encouraged the labours of the same bishop among his subjects. The effects proved salutary to the Hungarian nation: Sarolta, the daughter of Gylas, was given in marriage to Geysa, the chief prince of Hungary. She prevailed on her husband to receive Christianity, and the Gospel was once more introduced into a country through the zealous piety of a woman. Geysa, however, still retained much inclination to the idolatry of his fathers, though his conversations with Christian captives and missionaries made a strong impression on his mind: but he was prevented from apostatizing, by the zeal and authority of Adalbert, archbishop of Prague, who visited Hungary toward the conclusion of this century. Whether the king's conversion was real or nominal, the most salutary consequences attended the reception of the Gospel by his subjects. Humanity, peace and civilization began to flourish among a people hitherto fierce and barbarous in the extreme. Stephen, the son of Geysa, was baptized by Adalbert; and became a more decisive defender of the faith than his father had been. Under Stephen, Hungary was almost wholly evangelized; and nothing was omitted by this zealous prince to establish Christianity throughout his dominions. There is every reason to believe that many real conversions took place, though I can give no particular account of them.

But Adalbert has been mentioned; and it will be proper to give the reader a short sketch of the life of that extraordinary personage.* He was born in 956, and ordained by Diethmar, archbishop of Prague. He beheld this same archbishop dying in terrible

Adalbert born, A.D. 956.

* Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints. [April 23. Vit. et pass. S. Adalbert. in Canisii Lect. Antiq. tom. 3.]

agonies of conscience, on account of his neglect of pastoral duty, and his secular avarice. Adalbert was appointed his successor: but with so little satisfaction to himself, that he was never seen to smile afterwards. Being asked the reason, he said, "It is an easy thing to wear a mitre and a cross, but an awful thing to [have to] give an account of a bishopric before the Judge of quick and dead." Bohemia, the scene of his diocese, was covered with idolatry: there were Christians, indeed, in that country, but chiefly nominal ones. In vain did the pious archbishop endeavour to reform the evils and abuses. The people undesignedly gave the noblest testimony to his sincerity, when they observed, that it was impossible for him and them to have communion with each other, because of the perfect opposition of life and conversation. Adalbert sighing over the wretched objects of his charge, and still willing to labour in the best of causes, travelled as a missionary into Poland, and planted the Gospel in Dantzic. Here his labours seem to have been crowned with good success.* In visiting a small island he was knocked down with the oar of a boat: however, recovering himself, he made his escape, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and with his fellow-labourers quitted the place. Indeed he was forced to flee for his life: and, at length, was murdered by barbarians in Lithuania; or, as some think, in Prussia,† about the year 997. Siggo ‡ a pagan priest, was the principal instrument of his death. He is commonly styled the Apostle of Prussia, though he only evangelized the city of Dantzic, which is in the neighbourhood of that country. Such was Adalbert:—and so small is the account transmitted to us, of one of the wisest and best of men, whom God had raised up for the instruction of the species,—a man willing to labour and to suffer for Christ!

Murdered by barbarians, A.D. 997.

Wolfang, bishop of Ratisbon, may properly accompany Adalbert, who had received his bishopric of Prague, in consequence of Wolfang's having vacated part of his diocese for that purpose. The latter was a native of Suabia, and was brought up at a school

Wolfang bishop of Ratisbon.

* [Cent. Magd. Cent. x. c. 10. p. 629.] † [Cent. Magd. Cent. x. c. 3. p. 26.]
‡ Mosheim, Cent. xi. Chap. i. [s. 2.]

in Wurtzburg. His experience gave him an opportunity of seeing, that professors of wisdom may even be greater slaves to pride and envy than the illiterate. Wearied with the view of scholastic strifes, he sighed for solitude, but was engaged to attend Henry, his friend, to Triers, who was there chosen archbishop. Wolfang there taught children, and was dean of a community of ecclesiastics. In 972, he went to preach in Hungary, but had no great success. He was afterwards appointed bishop of Ratisbon: there he reformed the clergy, and was indefatigable in preaching twenty-two years. Henry, duke of Bavaria, placed under him his four children, Henry, afterwards emperor,—Gisela, queen of Hungary,—Bruno, bishop of Augsburg,—and Brigit, abbess of Ratisbon, all eminent characters. Wolfang died in 994.*

Preaches in Hungary, A.D. 972.

Dies, A.D. 994.

The plantation of the Gospel in Brandenburg was begun by the zeal and victorious arms of Charlemagne; but was not completed, in a national sense, till the year 928, under Henry the Fowler, the predecessor of Otho I.†

The Gospel planted in Brandenburg, A.D. 928.

The labours of Gerard, bishop of Toul in Germany, also deserve to be mentioned. He was himself an eminent preacher; and often commissioned zealous pastors to preach in country parishes. He cultivated learning among his disciples; but at the same time took care, so far as it lay in his power, that they should apply themselves to devotion. That he would be very earnest in these pious efforts will admit of no doubt, if it be true, that he declared, that he found more delight in heavenly exercises during one moment, than a worldly soul finds in worldly pleasures for a thousand years.‡

Gerard of Toul labours in Germany.

If we look into Scandinavia, we find that the work of God, which had begun so prosperously in the last century, by the labours of Anscarius, had met with a severe check in Denmark,§ whose king, Gormo the 3rd, laboured to extirpate the Gospel there entirely. His queen Tyra, however, openly professed it, and gave it all the support which she was enabled to do, under great disadvantages.

* Butler, x. [Oct. 31.]

† Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg, by the late king of Prussia.

‡ Butler, iv. [April. 23.]

§ Mosheim, Cent. x. c. 1. [s. 7.]

But the power and influence of the king prevailed, and most of his subjects returned to idolatry. At length Henry I. called the Fowler, the predecessor of the great Otho, led an army into Denmark; and, through the terror of his arms, obliged Gormo to promise submission to the commands of the emperor. Under the protection of this last prince, Unni,* then archbishop of Hamburg, with some faithful labourers, came into Denmark, and brought over many to the profession of divine truth; but Gormo, himself remained inflexible. Harold, the son of Gormo, however, received the word with respect: for his mother Tyra by her instructions had, at least, removed all prejudice from his mind. Unni, with the consent of Gormo, visited the islands, and formed Christian churches among them. The king himself was allowed by his conqueror Henry, to choose, whether he would receive Christianity, or reject it; but was prohibited from persecuting the faith in his dominions: and thus, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, a sovereign prince was, by a foreign power, prevented from committing that evil among his subjects, to which his own inclinations would have led him. I cannot vindicate the imperious proceedings of Henry; the labours of Unni were, however, highly laudable, and Providence smiled on his benevolent views in propagating truth and holiness.

Unni, animated with success, determined to follow the pattern of Anscarius, and to visit the kingdom of Sweden. He entered the Baltic, and arrived at Birca: there he found that the Gospel had been extinct: for seventy years, no bishop had appeared among them, except Rembert, the successor of Anscarius. There probably were, however, some souls then alive, who had heard the Gospel with joy in former times; and it pleased God to give large success to the ministry of Unni. He fixed the Gospel in Sweden, and planted it even in the remoter parts of that northern region. At length, he finished his glorious course at Birca, in the year 936. The savage disposition of the princes, and the confusion of the times, had tended to obliterate the traces of Anscarius's labours: but, at length, Eric,

Unni, Archbishop of Hamburg, fixed the Gospel in Sweden; and dies. A.D. 936.

* Centuriat. Cent. x. [c. 2. p. 21.]

the eighth king of Sweden, and still more his son and successor, Olaus the second, favoured the propagation of the Gospel.

The former of these princes requested the archbishop of Bremen to supply his kingdom with missionaries. The archbishop sent him two persons of knowledge, piety, and integrity, Adalvard, and Stephen. They laboured with much success for a time; but the natural enmity of depraved mankind will exert itself against true piety, whatever be the form of government under which men live. The nobles of Sweden were enraged to find their licentiousness of manners so restrained; and they commenced a religious persecution against both the missionaries and the king. The former were beaten with rods, and expelled from Upsal: the latter was murdered on account of his piety. His son and successor Olaus was not discouraged from cherishing Christianity; and his zeal and piety were crowned with success.*

Thus were Sweden and Denmark, after a variety of changes, reduced into subjection to the form, and, no doubt, many individuals to the power, of the Gospel. In the latter country, after the death of Henry I. the inhabitants refused to pay tribute to Otho the Great, his successor. This monarch obliged them to submit; and required Harold, the son and successor of Gormo, to receive Christian baptism. All that we know of this prince, inclines me to believe, that there was no reluctance on his part. He was baptized, together with his wife and little son, whose name had been Sueno; and, in honour of the emperor, he was now called Suen-Otho. Harold, during his whole life, took every wise and salutary method to propagate divine truth among his subjects, and to restrain vice and immorality. Nor is it much to be doubted, that he would instruct his son Suen-Otho to act in the same manner; and labour to impress on his mind the power of that divine religion, which he himself seems to have felt. Be that as it may, Suen-Otho formed a junction with the chiefs of the country, who were offended at the pious zeal of Harold: in consequence of which, the latter was murdered: and Suen-Otho, renouncing even the name, which had been

* Cent. x. [c. 2. p. 20, and 29.]

imposed on him, persecuted the Christians with great cruelty; and, for a time, gave a predominancy to the Pagan interest in his dominions. It is remarkable, however, that, like another Manasseh, in his affliction he knew that the Lord was God. Being expelled from his throne, and forced to live in exile among the Scots, he was induced to remember the lessons of his childhood: he repented of his crimes; and, being restored to his throne, like the same Manasseh he laboured to destroy the idolatry which he had supported, and, in the latter part of his life, trode in the steps of his father.

In this century, the light of the Gospel penetrated into Norway.* About the year 912, an English missionary, named Bernard, attempted to plant the doctrine of Christ in this barbarous region. Olaus, the king, listened to his discourses, and professed himself to be a convert; but he still attended to omens and Gentile superstitions. All the arguments of Bernard were ineffectual to cure him of his inveterate propensities; whence he was more a disgrace than an ornament to his profession. About the year 933, another king, called Hagen, who had been educated among the English, employed certain missionaries of that nation to instruct his subjects. But the Norwegians persisted in their idolatry; and his successor Graufeldt pursued the same plan, but without effect. Several successive princes laboured in the same cause, with the same ill success. The form of a government established in any country, seems from experience to have been of no capital moment, in regard to the success of Christian missions. Despotism, limited monarchy, and republicanism, have each been serviceable or detrimental in the cause; and to associate strongly any one of these forms with the progress of the Gospel, is, perhaps, forming an imagination of an alliance between Church and State that has no solid foundation in nature. We see, in the case before us, that a republican form would have proved destructive to the best of causes. It is to the effusion of the Holy Spirit, directing subordinate causes, and, independently of mere human politics, that the success of the Gospel is ever to be

The Gospel carried into Norway by an English missionary, A.D 912.

Other missionaries, A.D. 933.

* Centuriat. Cent. x. [c. 2. p. 23.] Mosheim, Cent. x. Chap. i. [s. 8.]

ascribed. At length, Haco, king of Norway, being driven from his throne, on account of his tyrannical government, having himself also persecuted the Christians in Norway, and having put himself under the protection of that same Harold of Denmark, whom we have already celebrated, became a patron of Christianity among his people. For Harold both instructed him in the nature of Christianity, and restored him to his dominions. Haco, humbled and enlightened, recommended the Gospel in an assembly of the people, in the year 945. His zeal and solemnity were very striking; but the fierce and barbarous people were not much moved; and the remembrance of his former ill conduct would naturally prejudice their minds against his arguments. Olaus, who reigned some time after, was the most successful of all the Norwegian princes in recommending Christianity. At length, Swein, king of Denmark, having made himself master of Norway, obliged his subjects universally to renounce their gods, and profess the Gospel. Doubtless many compulsory methods were used by several, probably by all these princes, by no means agreeable to the genius of the Gospel. Their intentions, however, seem laudable; and at least the zealous labours of the missionaries deserve to be noticed. Among these, Gutbebald, an English pastor, was most eminent. The idol Thor was dragged from its place, and publicly burnt in the sight of its worshippers. In fact, Norway, in the form of its religion, became Christian throughout. The Orkney Islands, then subject to the Norwegian crown, received the light of the Gospel, which, in some degree, penetrated also into Iceland, and Greenland; and, in this century, the triumph of Christianity was complete throughout all Scandinavia.

A.D. 945.

The labours of Adelbert,* the first archbishop of Magdeburg, deserve to be mentioned in this place. The Rugi, about the year 960, entreated the emperor Otho I. to send them a Christian bishop. This people lived in Pomerania, between the Oder and the Wipper, and in the isle of Rugen in the Baltic. The town of Rugenwald still bears their name. They were a remarkably savage race, and had a famous temple in Rugen. Cer-

Labours of Adelbert.

* [Cent. Magd. Cent x. c 2. p. 16.]

tain monks of the mission-seminary of new Corbie, had formerly laboured with success, in various provinces of the Sclavi or Sclavonians, and in the whole isle of Rugen, the Rugi being a tribe of the Sclavi. An oratory was erected in the isle, in honour of Christ, and in memory of St. Vitus, patron of new Corbie. But the savage people soon relapsed; and making Vitus the chief of their gods, erected to him a temple and idol with sacrifices, permitting no merchant to buy or sell there who did not first give some offering for their sacrifices, or for the temple of their god, whom they now called Swantewith. "Thus," says Helmodus, "the man whom we confess a martyr and servant of Christ, they adore as god, a creature for the Creator; nor is there any nation, who so much abhors Christians, especially pastors." A memorable caution for teachers to beware lest their instructions of the heathen may only lead them from one species of idolatry to another. However, at their desire, Otho I. sent Adelbert to the isle. But the people were hardened: several of his fellow-preachers were murdered, though he himself escaped. This fruitless mission was in 961. Adelbert was afterwards, in 970, appointed archbishop of Magdeburg, where Adelaide the empress, and widow of Otho I. passed the greatest part of her time, and gave herself up very much to his directions: she had gone through a great variety of prosperity and adversity, and was very pious and exemplary. Adelbert was an instrument of converting great numbers of the Sclavi: he supplied his diocese with able pastors for the new converts, and died in 982, having very laudably ruled the Church for twelve years.*

Mission, A. D. 961.

Adelbert dies, A.D. 982.

In the preceding century, Rollo, a Norwegian pirate, at the head of a valiant and lawless band of soldiers, who are commonly called Normans, invaded and ravaged France. But in the year 912, Charles the Simple, a monarch ill calculated to withstand so powerful an enemy, purchased a peace, by investing Rollo with the dukedom of Normandy, and by giving him his daughter Gisela in marriage, on condition that he should embrace Christianity. All reli-

Rollo professes the Christian religion, A.D. 912.

* Butler, xii. [Dec. 16.]

gions were equally indifferent to Rollo and his followers: they therefore professed the Gospel without the least hesitation. It seemed proper to notice this event, as introducing the famous line of Norman dukes into France, whose history, in process of time, involves so much both of French and English history. As for the rest, I know of no evidence of an effusion of the Divine Spirit which attended their reception of Christianity. The Normans, however, gradually became better members of society; and at length began to patronize, in some form or other, something that bore the appearance of more serious religion.

While the nations, who had long enjoyed the forms of true religion, were slumbering in superstitions, or wallowing in gross wickedness, the Head of the Church, in his providence, still reserved to himself a GODLY SEED: and, by their labours, extended the pale of the Gospel. Poland had hitherto remained in the thickest night of ignorance, and both an inland situation and a barbarous neighbourhood seemed to exclude it from the light of divine truth. Some Poles, however, travelling into Bohemia * and Moravia, on account of business, were struck with what they heard concerning Christianity: they listened to the ministry of the Word of God, and received it gladly. Returning home, they every where recommended to their countrymen the grace of the Gospel. Moreover, foreigners often visiting Poland, on account of trade, preached Christ as they were able, to the Poles. Something divinely excellent appeared to be in Christianity; and the happy infection spread from heart to heart. It reached, at length, Micislaus, the king or duke of Poland; who divorced his seven wives, with whom he had cohabited, and married Dambrouca, the daughter of Boleslaus, the duke of Bohemia. He was baptized in the year 965; and, by the pious and charitable instructions of his new spouse, was induced to exert his authority in the propagation of the Gospel through his dominions: in fine, Poland became a Christian nation; nor is it probable that this was a mere outward profession: that it was so in certain respects, there is no doubt; but nevertheless, the circumstances of the narrative carry the appearance of

The king of Poland baptized, A. D. 965.

* Cent. Magd. [Cent. x. c. 2. p. 17.]

something truly divine. Nor is that true, which Mosheim * asserts, that an inward change of affections and principles was far from being an object of attention in this barbarous age. It seems most probable, that it was an object of attention in the missionaries, and in those who zealously received them. We have seen, in several instances, an evidence of zeal in preaching, and a constancy in suffering, which can scarcely be explained on any other principle than that of godly sincerity. And we have lived to see a refined age as indifferent concerning an inward change as any barbarous period whatever.

In the year 955, Olga, the queen of Russia, sailed from Kiow to Constantinople, and received baptism, together with her attendants. On her return, she persevered in the Christian religion, but could not prevail on her family and subjects, to receive the same: the Greek missionaries, however, laboured still, and gradually succeeded.† At length Wolodomir, her grandson in the year 961, married Anna, sister of the emperor Basil, who, by her zealous importunity, prevailed on her spouse to receive Christianity. He was baptized in the year 987; and, from that time, Russia received a Christian establishment, and has ever since considered herself as a daughter of the Greek Church.

The queen of Russia sails to Constantinople, and is there baptized. A. D. 955.

Russia becomes Christian, A.D. 987.

Ulric, son of count Hucbald, born in 893, was placed at Augsburg under the care of Adalberon, bishop of that city. He was made, at length, bishop of Augsburg, by the emperor, Henry the Fowler. He comforted his people, who had been plundered by the Hungarians: he avoided the court: he kept close to his flock, and was equally renowned for devotion, and for pastoral labours. He died about 973.‡

Ulric, bishop of Augsburg, laboured in his diocese for 50 years: dies, A. D. 973.

Thus, in an age of proverbial darkness, that illustrious prophecy continued to receive its accomplishment; "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers." § The regular and civilized governments in the world sustained such dreadful calamities from the irruption

* Chap. 1. Cent. x. [s. 4.]
† Gibbon, Vol. v. [c. 55.]
‡ [Cent. Magd. Cent. x. c. 10. p. 602.]
§ [Isaiah xlix. 23.]

of Pagan nations, on all sides, that their encouragement of Christian missions was equally humane and prudential. The precepts of the Gospel only were found effectual to meliorate the dispositions of barbarians; and, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, no doubt, this was the happy effect on the minds of many.—But, it will still be said, "the conversion of a great number was only nominal, and compulsory methods were employed, which are by no means adapted to the genius of the Gospel." It must be allowed, that the latter of these assertions is strictly true, and the former, in many instances, but by no means in all. The efforts of the tenth and the three preceding centuries, to extend Christianity, had their blemishes, which have been malignantly insisted on, and even exaggerated by modern writers. Defective, however, as these efforts were, they form the principal glory of those times; and, partly by evident proofs and a detail of circumstances, and partly by analogy and the nature of things, they appear to have been attended with the effusion of the Divine Spirit, the genuine conversion of numbers, and the improvement of human society. The virtues of many at least, of the missionaries, are above any encomium which I can give; though they were born in rude ages, and are consigned to contempt and oblivion by polite historians, who lavish all their praises on heroes and politicians. If, however, the labours of an obscure individual may attract the attention of the public, the names of Boniface, Anscarius, Adelbert, Unni, and others of the same class, shall be honoured among men, and the work of propagating the Gospel shall appear laudable in an extreme degree. It must appear so to all, who desire that the name of Jesus should be honoured through the earth, and that the power of his grace should be felt in every place, and in every heart. But to what lengths will not scepticism proceed? It has even been advanced, that the attempt to propagate Christianity, without the consent of the government established in every country, is unlawful in its nature. A position so injurious to the character of many of the best and wisest men, whom it behoves us to celebrate in this history, and so conveniently favourable to the selfish, avaricious, indolent spirit of nominal Christians, will deserve to be investigated and exposed in its genuine colours.

CHAP. III.

AN APOLOGY FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE commission which our Saviour gave to his Apostles, a little before his ascension, forms of itself the strongest apology for the practice of Christian missionaries in all ages. "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." *

It cannot be justly said, that this commission of evangelizing all nations is restricted to the Apostles, because He, who gave these directions, declares, He will always be with those who obey them, to the end of the world. The commission is then as much in force at this day, as it was at the first age of Christianity; and will continue in force till time shall be no more. The promise of divine support, to encourage the missionaries in the prosecution of a work so arduous and so difficult, extends to all ages, and would be perfectly inapplicable to those ages, if any such there were, which should have no right to propagate the Gospel.

"Is every person then, calling himself a Christian, authorized to preach the Gospel among the heathen nations?" Not so: nor is every person called a Christian authorized to preach in Christian countries. Certain qualifications and endowments, and above all, the real and genuine influence of the Holy Spirit, are necessary for this purpose. To define and to ascertain these in particular cases, enter not into the subject before us. Suffice it to say, that, however in point of prudence and expediency, it be proper to procure, if practicable, the consent and concurrence of the government of the country which is the object of the mission, such consent and concurrence is not necessary as a legitimate qualification of a missionary, who should undertake to evangelize [illegible] tries. Our Lord well knew that such co[illegible] tainable in any country under heaven at t[illegible] he gave this commission. He mentions no [illegible] nor did the Apostles conceive the necessity of [illegible]

Questions concerning missions.

* Matthew xxviii. 19, 20

It is well known, on the contrary, that they persisted in their mission, not only without, but also against the express prohibitions of all governments, whether Jewish or Gentile. The nature and reasonableness of Christianity itself is such, that, wherever it is fairly exhibited, in connexion with its proper proofs and evidences, those, who hear it, are bound in conscience to obey it, magistrates as well as others; and, as we have seen, the magistrate himself not only may, but ought to promote it, for the good of society.*

"But the Apostles wrought miracles; and therefore, though they had a right to propagate Christianity, others who do not so, have no right to preach, except with the consent of the government." It does not appear, that the evidence of their commission rested wholly on miracles, though it must be confessed these formed a striking part of it, and were afforded by Divine Providence, in order to facilitate the progress of the then infant religion. But if, what no serious Christian will deny, there is an internal evidence in the Gospel itself, which ought to weigh with every reasonable mind, abstracted from any thing miraculous, it will be the duty of every one to receive it, when fairly proposed; and the obedience due to divine revelation is binding not only on those who hear it from one who works miracles, but also on those who hear it from one who brings unexceptionable testimonies of miracles having been wrought by others, in attestation of Christianity. Whoever attentively reads the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and the historical parts of the Epistles, will find, that all ministers, regularly ordained,—for the case of self-ordained ministers I do not here consider,—thought it their duty to preach the word every where, whether they could work miracles or not. The miraculous powers were an adventitious circumstance; of great importance, indeed, in the opening of Christianity; but if the stress of an evangelical commission to the heathen had ever been meant to be laid upon it, it is surprising that this condition should never be mentioned in the sacred volume: it is not to be conceived, that the numberless missionaries in the apostolic ages should all have been ignorant of it. Besides, with the cessation of miracles, the work of promulgation must have

* See Chap. xvii. p. 35. of this Vol.

probably ceased; whereas, it appears, that in the succeeding centuries, even to the tenth, missionaries still laboured; and, in a greater or less degree, the work prospered in their hand.

If these reflections have any weight, they show that it has been inconsiderately asserted, that civil governments alone have a right to determine, whether Christian missionaries shall preach the Gospel or not within their dominions. I have proved, I think, that they have a right to establish Christianity; but it does not follow that they have a right to exclude it. Right and wrong, in this case, have a higher foundation than human politics. Trajan might think himself justified in persecuting Christians, because they transgressed the Roman laws, which forbade the introduction of foreign religions. But Trajan ought to have known, that there is an authority in religion superior to any human constitutions whatever.

Though the authority of Scripture, the practice of the apostolic age, and the labours of the best and wisest of their successors, from age to age, seem, taken together, to form a sufficient apology for Christian missions at this day, yet we need not fear, in this cause, to appeal to the common sense of mankind. If a whole nation were afflicted with a pestilential disease, and a foreigner were in possession of a medicine, that might probably save many of their lives, it might be prudent, no doubt, for that foreigner to obtain an express license, if practicable, from the government, for affording medical aid to its subjects. But will any man say, that it would be wrong in him to endeavour to heal the diseased, if he had an opportunity, and had the benevolence to attempt it, though he had no formal sanction from the magistrate? To promote the welfare of our neighbours, is, next to our duty to God, the most essential ingredient in the character of a good man. Is the express consent of the legislature necessary, antecedently to every office of mercy and humanity?—It is not necessary to say that the propagation of the Gospel is the most salutary and the most important of all works of charity. What then ought to be thought of him who would leave to the discretion of the magistrate the great office of labouring to win souls; and would charge with sin an employment of all others the most beneficent to mankind?

"Is not this to teach rebellion against lawful authority, and to countenance an undue interference with foreign governments?" Could this be proved, I should not know how to apologize for missionaries. For I scarcely know any thing more diametrically opposite to the genius of the Gospel than such a conduct. Let it be carefully observed, that our argument goes no farther than to justify a PACIFIC attempt to teach Christianity throughout the Globe. "If they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another," is the rule of the Divine Author of Christianity. A missionary must be prepared to endure, not to inflict evil: he may expect opposition, and even death itself. He must patiently sustain his lot: he must forego not only all violence in attempting to propagate Christianity, but also all artifice and secular intrigues: he must not only forbear to disturb the government of the country, and to weaken men's attachment to it, but he must do more: he must teach obedience to it, as an essential branch of Christianity itself, and an obedience too, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." If his word is not received in one place, he must make experiment of another, in dependence on Divine Providence and grace. Meekness, patience, submission to civil authority must attend him in every step. Such were the apostolic missionaries; such in a good degree were the missionaries of the dark ages, which we are reviewing. And I am apt to think, that those, who object to missions in general, have had their eye on the political craft of the Jesuits, or the furious factions of enthusiasts. For I can scarcely believe we are grown so totally callous to every Christian sensation, as deliberately to condemn all missions conducted in the true spirit of the Gospel.

Do we expect that, according to numerous prophecies, the kingdom of Christ shall spread through all nations? And are no means to be employed to promote it?—Shall we complain of the want of universality in the best religion, and discourage every attempt to effect that universality? With what an ill grace do objectors to the propagation of the Gospel make such complaints? Are human efforts concerned in all other works of Divine Providence, and are they in this, the most important of all, to be excluded? Are we to sit still, and expect some sudden and miraculous

providential interposition, and is this the only instance, in which Socinians, and men who call themselves rational Christians, will use no rational methods, in order to produce the most desirable effects? Or have we learned to despise the importance of Christianity itself, and do we think that the present comfort and future felicity of mankind are no way connected with the subject before us?

I propose these few questions, leaving the resolution of them to the consciences of those, who have had it in their power to encourage Christian missions in our times, and who have opposed them. To have been particularly active in extending the Redeemer's kingdom forms no part of the glory of this country.* Denmark, a poor impotent government, compared with ours, has, it is well known, effected in this way what may cause Britons to blush, and what should stir us up to virtuous emulation. With every advantage in our hands, for the propagation of the Gospel, we have done very little indeed, and the annals of the several dark ages we have reviewed, have exhibited a spirit of adventurous charity unknown to those, who now boast themselves as the most enlightened and the most philosophic of mankind.†

CHAP. IV.

WRITERS AND EMINENT MEN IN THIS CENTURY.

In a dearth so excessive, there are few, who deserve to be noticed either for knowledge or for piety; and fewer still for both. My chief view, in this chapter, is to give the reader an idea of the state of true religion in these times; nor will the picture here exhibited be materially erroneous, though it could be proved, that Theophylact, one of the authors whom I shall quote, belonged to the next century,

* [Blessed be God, since this was written, this reproach has been fully rolled away from our beloved country; and though we are still far from rendering unto the Lord according to the manifold blessings bestowed upon us, yet the change which has in this respect taken place within the last fifty years, is great indeed, enough to cause any one to exclaim—What hath the Lord wrought.]

† [I would refer those who would wish to see this subject more fully treated of by kindred spirits, to the Rev. B. W. Noel, on Christian Missions; and the anniversary sermons before the Church Missionary Society.]

as Mosheim thinks. For the spirit and taste of the tenth and eleventh centuries are so similar, that what illustrates the one will illustrate the other. The very toleration of the Roman popedom itself, after the detection of its flagitiousness before all the world, evinces the uncommonly low condition of Christian knowledge in this age; proofs, however, will appear, that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the Church, and that there were those who reverenced and felt the power of her doctrines.

It is not in Rome, but in the more recent Churches, that this power appears. Whether it was practically exemplified by Bruno, archbishop of Cologne, in Germany, is not very evident. But, in knowledge and learning, he was very eminent. He was brother to Otho I. and by the desire of the people of Cologne, was fixed by that great prince in the archbishopric. We must not expect much regard to ecclesiastical discipline in these times; and therefore are not to be surprised, that a prince so religious as Otho was, should invest his relation also with the civil power of a dukedom. Bruno is remarked, however, to have been among the first who united offices so discordant in the same person.* This was to secularize the Church, and Cologne continues in a similar state to this day. Bruno was nevertheless an assiduous promoter of religion. Normans, Danes, and various others, who travelled in his province, he brought over to the profession of Christianity. He restrained the luxury both of clergy and people: and was himself a shining example of modest and frugal manners. He died about the year 965.

Character of Bruno.

His death, A.D. 965.

Unni, a far more decided character, has been already celebrated. As archbishop of Hamburg, he acted with a vigour and a piety worthy the importance of that See. He was highly reverenced by the German emperors of his time; and that a person so opulent should choose to labour as a missionary in such countries as Denmark and Sweden, argues a zeal of no common degree. He died at Stockholm in 936.†

Death of Unni, A.D. 936.

By the advice of Adolvard, bishop of Verden, Adelda-

* Cent. Magd. Cent. x. [c. 10. p. 607, &c.]
† Cent. Magd. Cent. x. [c. 10. p. 610.]

gus, who had discharged some petty office in the Church, was sent for to court by Otho the Great, and made his chancellor. On the death of Unni, he was appointed archbishop of Hamburg, but was so acceptable, by his talents and industry, to the emperor, that he still continued in the same secular employments. Adeldagus sent a number of pastors into Denmark, and was present with Otho at Rome when the popedom was reformed. His flock at Hamburg complained, and not without reason, of his absence from them. The emperor at length gave him liberty to return home. His care of the poor, and many rather princely than pastoral virtues, were remarkable. But I can form no great idea of the spirituality of a man, who neglects residence among his flock, and continues to act in a secular capacity under three successive princes, while he holds a bishopric. He served Otho II. and III. with the same success and ability with which he had done Otho I. and after he had held his bishopric 53 years, he died under Otho III. in the year 988.*

Brief account of Adeldagus; was bishop 53 years; died, A.D. 988.

Libentius, an Italian, by the desire of Adeldagus, was appointed his successor. Much is said in praise of this prelate. He often visited the Vandals, a barbarous people in Poland, about the Vistula, and taught them the way of salvation. He sent pastors to distant nations, and was a shining exemplar of piety and beneficence. He died in 1013.†

Libentius, a shining character, dies, A.D. 1013.

Adolvard, bishop of Verden, who, as we have mentioned, recommended Adeldagus to the patronage of Otho I. was himself an excellent pattern of piety and probity. He discharged the office of a faithful pastor in his diocese, and took pains to instruct the ignorant Vandals in the way of salvation.‡

Of Adalbert, archbishop of Prague, I can find no more than has been already mentioned; though his labours deserve to have been minutely recorded.

That the true doctrines of the Gospel, and some true knowledge of their experimental use and power, were not lost in the Church altogether, the following quotations will

* Cent. Magd. Cent. x. [c. 10. p. 612.] † Ibid. [p. 614.]
‡ Ibid. [p. 627.]

abundantly evince; though of the authors themselves no particular account can be given, nor is it very clear at what exact period of time some of them lived; the passages selected from them will serve, however, to shew the religious taste of the times.

Ansbert, speaking of the effect of the Divine Word, observes, "There is no doubt, but that by the holy preaching of the Word the faithful receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord bearing witness to this, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.'" *

[Lib. 5 in 11. cap. apoc.]

The value of the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit has been frequently attested in these memoirs, and in a language very similar to the following passage of Smaragdus on the same subject: "Our spiritual sense is renewed by the exercises of wisdom, meditation on the word of God, and the knowledge of his statutes; and the more proficiency any person daily makes by reading, and the deeper hold the truth has upon his understanding, the more the new man grows day by day.—Let no man attribute to the teacher, that which he understands from his mouth; for unless there be an INTERNAL TEACHER, the external one labours in vain. The Jews heard Christ preach in one manner, the Apostles in another; those to their condemnation, these to their salvation: for the Spirit taught these in the heart, what those heard outwardly by the ear.—Unless the Lord shine into the heart of the hearer, the teacher labours in darkness.—For the faith of the nations comes not by the wisdom of the composition, but by the gift of divine vocation."†

[In Ep. Paul ad Rom. c. 12.]

[Sup. Evangel. Joan. c. 14.]

[Smaragd in Luc. c. 5.]

"If thou wouldst have thy sons obedient to thee," says Theophylact, "instruct them in the Divine Word. Say not, that it belongs only to persons professionally religious to read the Scriptures. It is the duty of every Christian, particularly of those who are in the midst of secular employments: they need the greatest help, as they live in a tempest. It is for thy own interest, that thy children be well versed in Scripture; thence they

[Theoph. in Ep. Paul. ad Eph. c. 6.]

* John vi. 63. Cent. Magd. [Cent. x. c. 4. p. 35. de Verbo Dei.]
† Cent. Magd. [Cent. x. c. 4. p. 35. De Verbo Dei.]

will learn to reverence their parents." Let modern sceptics and infidels attend to the voice of a writer who lived in a dark age of the church; for he was a luminary of these dark ages. He most probably lived in the eleventh century; and the plain precepts just mentioned deserve, from us who live in the eighteenth, more serious attention than whole volumes of metaphysical subtilties, or political speculations.

Speaking of the state of man after the Fall, Theophylact observes: "Some are found, indeed, to be good tempered and benign by nature, none by exercise and meditation.. And though some be reckoned good men, they adulterate every action by vain glory. But he, whose goodness centers in his own glory, not in goodness itself, whenever an opportunity offers, will indulge evil lusts. For, if among us Christians, the terrors of eternal condemnation, every advantage of study, and the lives of innumerable Saints, can scarcely preserve men in the practice of virtue, how can the nugatory tales of the Gentiles teach them virtue? It will not be matter of surprise, indeed, if they confirm them in wickedness." * [Theoph. in Joan. c. 3.]

With such discrimination of ideas did this writer distinguish between the state of nature and of grace! Let us hear him express his thoughts on the Gospel, as opposed to the law. "The law, if it detect any man sinning, even in a circumstance that may appear trifling, as in gathering sticks on the sabbath day,† condemns him to death: but the Holy Spirit, receiving those who have committed innumerable offences, in the laver of baptismal regeneration, justifies them, and quickens those who are dead in sin.—The righteousness of God preserves us; not our own righteousness: for what righteousness can we have, who are altogether corrupt? But God hath justified us, not by our works, but by faith, which grace ought to grow more and more consummate; as the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.‡ Truly it is not enough to have once believed. For, as the benefits of divine grace exceed human thoughts, there is absolute need of faith to conceive [Theoph. in 2 Ep. Paul. ad Cor. c. 3.] [Theoph. in Ep. ad Rom. c. 1.]

* Cent. Magd. Cent. x. [c. 4. de Liber. Arbit. p. 129.]
† Numb. xv. 32, &c. ‡ Luke xvii. 5.

[Ibid. c. 10.] and apprehend them.—The righteousness of God is by faith. This needs not our labours and works; but the whole belongs to the grace of God. Moses asserts that man is justified by works.* But none are found to fulfil them. Justification by the law is therefore rendered impossible. This is the righteousness of God, when a man is justified by grace, so that no blemish, no spot is found in him." †

[Id. in 2 Ep. ad Cor. c. 5.]

" Maxime Teucrorum ductor, quo sospite nunquam
Res equidem Trojæ victas aut regna fatebor."

So speaks Evander to Virgil's hero. With great propriety may we say of justification by Christ through faith, the leading doctrine of Christianity, that while its existence is preserved in the Church, the power of Christ's kingdom is not destroyed in the world. There, doubtless, were those in Theophylact's time, who knew how to feed on the doctrine of grace, and convert it into spiritual nourishment. This writer, it should be observed, belonged to the eastern Church, of which we hear very little in the dark ages before us. Serious and humble spirits, therefore, in those regions, were not left without a light shining amidst the tenfold obscurity of the times, by which their feet might be guided in the paths of peace. And as it is not to be supposed, that the light was preserved to no purpose, we may safely conclude that the real Church was still in existence in the East.

The same intelligent writer gives us an illustration of the abundance of grace, spoken of in Rom. v. which deserves to be mentioned. " Suppose a person is thrown into prison with his wife and children, because he is deep in debt, and then should be not only freed from the prison and the demands of the law, but also receive at once innumerable talents, be introduced into the royal palace, be presented with a kingdom, and accounted worthy of the same, and be reckoned a son of the king; This is the abundance of grace." ‡

Hear how experimentally he speaks of Christian faith.

* He appears to mean the same thing which St. Paul does, by the expression, " Moses describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, which doeth those things, shall live by them."—Rom. x. 5.

† Cent. Magd. [Cent. x. c. 4. de Evangel. et de Justificat. p. 154, and 5.

‡ Cent. Magd. [Cent. x. c. 4. p. 163. de Justif.]

"Faith is looked on as contemptible, because of the foolishness of preaching. He, who believes with great affection, extends his heart to God. He is united to him. His heart, inflamed, conceives a strong assurance, that it shall gain its desire. [Theoph. in Math. c. 17.] [Id. in Marc. c. 11.] We all know this by experience, because Christ hath said, Whatever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. He who believes, gives himself wholly to God, he speaks to him with tears; and in prayer holds the Lord, as it were, by the feet. O rich advantage, exceeding human thought, that every one who believes on him, gains two things, one, that he does not perish, the other, that he has eternal life. The faith of Christ is a holy work, and sanctifies its possessor. It is a guide to every good work: for works without faith are dead, and so is faith without works. There needs not the circuitous and afflictive course of legal works, but God justifies in a summary way those who believe. For, if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Faith is a shield, not vain sophisms, not fallacious argumentations. These hinder the soul, faith protects it. Know, that thou must not exact a reason from God; but however he dispose of thee, thou must believe him." † [In Joan. c. 3.] [In Joan. c. 6.] [In Ep. ad Rom. c. 9.] [In Ep. ad Eph. c. 6.] [In Ep. ad Heb. c. 3.]

It would have been wonderful indeed, if the Grecian divine before us, had been exempt from the errors relating to the WILL, which for ages of greater light had pervaded the eastern Church. He appears to have mixed the powers of grace and nature in the confused manner of Chrysostom; but it is not necessary to quote any passage for this purpose. A specimen of his writings on this point may be seen in the Magd. [Cent. Cent. 10. c. 4. p. 273.]

Giselbert, or a Theologian whose works bear that name, and who lived in or near this century, speaks of justification in the usual manner of Augustine, and of the later Latin fathers, and with the same valuable tincture of divine truth. "When I speak of the righteousness of God," says he, "I do not mean his absolute righteousness, but that with

* Rom. x. 9. † Cent. Magd. [Cent. 10. c. 4. p. 161. de Justificat.]

[In lib. Aldenar. c. 4.] which he clothes man, when he justifies the ungodly. The law and the prophets bear witness to this righteousness. The law, indeed, by commanding and threatening, and yet justifying no man, sufficiently indicates that man is justified by the gift of God, through [In lib. Aldenar. c. 4.] the quickening Spirit.—From God, beyond question, arises the beginning of salvation, never from us, nor with us. But the consent and the work, though not originating from us, is, however, not without us."* Of the work of grace, and of the duty of man in sanctification, he seems to speak with evangelical accuracy. The only error is, that by speaking of justification, as effected through the quickening Spirit, he seems to confound justification with sanctification. A common mistake. The great luminary of Africa fell into it: and, by his authority, gave it a sanction throughout the western Church. In another passage, Giselbert, by speaking of a variety of justifications, which he multiplies to seven, and, with equal reason, he might have multiplied them to seventy times seven,† tarnishes the precious doctrine of salvation exceedingly, and leaves no distinct ground for the afflicted conscience to seek peace with God. "The first remission is baptism; the seventh is by tears and confession." Whenever men are brought to feel what sin is,—what their own sin is,—they should learn the Scripture-doctrine of justification, which is, from first to last, by grace alone through Jesus Christ, and by the instrumentality of faith. Careless and self-righteous spirits may trifle at their ease with other views of doctrine; the contrite spirit cannot rest but in Christ alone; and by the truth as it is in Jesus the conscience finds peace, and the heart is set at liberty to serve God in love. However, a serious investigation of the doctrine of Christian righteousness, argues some just concern for the salvation of the soul, and often leads to the most salutary consequences. The worst state of the Church is, when a deep silence is preserved concerning justification in any mode or sense, however men's minds may be amused or agitated with a variety of religious speculations or contro-

* Cent. Magd. Id. [p. 154.]

† Id. [p. 273. at p. 640. c. 10. the Centuriators mention other unsound opinions advanced by this writer.]

versies. In that case, religion lives only in the brain, and has forsaken the conscience altogether.

But no writer of this age pierces more deeply into the spirit of divine truth, than the monk Radulph, who certainly flourished about the tenth century,* though very little is known concerning him. "Since," says he, "in every good work, divine mercy prevents us, if a man seek what recompense he may render to the Lord, he finds it not unless he receive it also from God. Divine grace, therefore, obliges us by its beneficence, and helps us when thus obliged, by many repetitions of the same grace, that we may not remain ungrateful." [Radulph. in Levit. l. 5. c. 3.] "Since all are by nature children of wrath, and born under the yoke of diabolical slavery, there is no ground to expect that any persons, except those whom celestial clemency delivers, should of themselves choose to come out of the general mass of depravity. For it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." † And he adds more to the same purport, speaking very fully concerning the "election of grace," ‡ and connecting that doctrine with practical views of humility and gratitude. [Id. in Levit. lib. 12. c. 1.]

Nilus, of Greek extraction, was born in the year 910, in Calabria. He was allowed to have lived in a state of eminent sanctity, though a married man; a singular circumstance for those times. After his wife's death he retired about the year 940 into a convent. In 976, the bishop of Calabria, and a lord of the territory, named Leo, with many priests, went to visit him, rather with a view to try his skill than to derive any benefit from his instructions. Nilus treated them civilly, prayed with them a short time, and then put into Leo's hands a book of maxims concerning the small number of the SAVED. The company expressed their dissatisfaction at the harshness of the doctrine. This induced Nilus to undertake the proof of it from the writings of the fathers, from St. Paul, and from the Gospels. "These maxims seem terrible," said he, "but the only reason why they do so, is this, they condemn your practice. Unless you be sincerely holy, you can- Nilus retires into a convent, A. D. 940.

* [Aubert. Miræi Auct. c. 283. J. Trithem. de Script Eccles. c. 299.]
† [Cent. Magd. Cent. x. p. 131. delliber. Arbit.] ‡ Rom. xi. 5.

not escape everlasting torments." They sighed, and trembled.

Further account of Nilus, A.D. 976.

He had, however, said no more than what the whole New Testament inculcates continually. And the conduct of these men, and of men like these, who abound in every age, show how little the Scripture is really believed. One of the company, whom Nilus knew to live in open sin, asked the monk, whether Solomon was saved or not? What is it to us, answered the upright Nilus, whether Solomon be saved or not? It is sufficient for you to know, that Christ pronounces damnation against all workers of iniquity. I should think it a more interesting object of inquiry for you, to consider whether you shall be saved or not. As for Solomon, the Scripture mentions not his repentance, as it does that of Manasseh. What effect this discourse had upon his visitors we know not. But it deserved to be recorded, both to show how dangerously men exercise their ingenuity in furnishing themselves with excuses to live in sin, and also to give a sample of plain dealing in those who undertake to instruct mankind.

Euphraxus, a haughty nobleman, was governor of Calabria under the Greek emperor. For the eastern part of Italy remained subject to that monarch a considerable time after the establishment of the popedom. Euphraxus sought every occasion of mortifying Nilus, because he gave him no presents, as other abbots did. Falling sick, however, he sent for him, and begged of him the monastic habit. Your baptismal vows suffice, said Nilus. Repentance requires no new vows, but a change of heart and life. This sentiment of Nilus was somewhat extraordinary for the tenth century. But Euphraxus, who sought to pacify his conscience at the easiest rate, with miserable ignorance importuned the abbot to invest him with the habit, to which he at length consented. Euphraxus died three days after. Infidelity may smile, but if ever the conscience become thoroughly alarmed, even in the most hardened sceptics and sensualists, it will quickly find, that the best of our moral works are no covering to the soul from the justice of an holy God; and therefore, unless the real doctrine of salvation be understood, men in their distress will betake themselves to such paltry refuges as this of Euphraxus. A licentious Charles II. anxiously flying to popish ceremonies, in his dying hours,

is not a singular case. Others, who like him, in health, despised the doctrines of grace, have done the same.

Nilus refused the offer of the bishopric of Capua: nor could the most flattering invitations induce him to go to Constantinople. He seemed likely to enjoy tranquil retirement to his death, in his convent. But Providence ordered it otherwise. The Saracens invaded Calabria, of which they afterwards gained possession. Nilus was driven from his home, and lived a long time in other convents. Otho III. upon a visit, pressed him to accept some situation in his dominions, wherever he should choose. Nilus thanked the emperor, but said, Our Divine Master will not forsake my brethren, if they be true monks, after I am gone. Ask what you please, said the emperor, I will give it you with pleasure. "The only thing I ask you," replied Nilus, "is, that you would save your soul. For you must give an account to God, as well as other men." This good abbot died at Tusculum, in an extreme old age, in the year 1005.* Nilus refuses a bishopric. Dies A.D. 1005.

Such was the light, scattered here and there, in the darkness of the times, by which the God of grace and mercy called, nourished, and sanctified his Church, and preserved to himself a godly seed in the earth, who should serve him in the Gospel of his Son, and prevent the cruel tyranny of the prince of darkness from completely overspreading the world.

CENTURY XI.

CHAP. I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE genuine Church of Christ, under the protection and influence of her Supreme Head, existed indeed in this century; but it would be in vain to attempt a regular and systematical history of her progress. Some particular circumstances in different parts of the Christian world, some

* A. Butler, [Sep. 26.]

pious and successful endeavours to propagate the Gospel in pagan countries, some degrees of opposition to the reigning idolatry and superstition, and the writings of some pious and evangelical Theologians, demonstrated that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the earth altogether.

Indeed, if this century may be said, in some degree, to have excelled the last, the superiority must be ascribed to the improvements of learning. For the arts and sciences revived, in a measure, among the clergy and the monks, though not cultivated * by any other set of men. I speak in regard to the western Church; for the eastern, enfeebled and oppressed by the Turks and Saracens from without, and by civil broils and factions from within, with difficulty preserved that degree of knowledge, which in those degenerate days still remained among the Greeks. I scarcely find any vestiges of Christian piety among the eastern Christians at this time: indeed, the attentive reader must have observed how barren of that sort of events, which relate to Christian history, Asia in general had been for some ages. So fatal was the influence of Mahometanism, and so judicially hardened were the descendants of those, who first had honoured the religion of Jesus. Constantinople was still called a Christian city, and in learning, and politeness, was superior to any part of the west: but it is in Europe we are to look for the emanations of piety. France and Italy excelled particularly in the cultivation of learning. Robert king of France, the son and successor of Hugh Capet, who began to reign in 996, and died in 1031, distinguished himself as the friend of science. Even the ferocious Normans, whose wars and devastations were so terrible in Italy, France, and England, after they had established their respective governments, applied themselves to the cultivation of the human mind, and diffused some light among the people whom they had subdued. This was particularly the case with the southern parts of Italy, and with our own island. William the Conqueror, savage and imperious as he was, restored letters to England, which, amidst the Danish depredations, had been almost extinguished. And we shall see, at least, one learned foreigner at the head of the English Church, who, uniting piety to

* Mosheim, Cent. xi. [p. 2. c. 1. s. 3.]

knowledge, was not unworthy of the Christian name. The learning itself, indeed, was not philosophical, but consisted chiefly of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. It was, however, connected with divinity: the Scriptures were held in high reputation: the hardy presumption of subtle theory, and the supercilious negligence concerning piety and public worship, which have marked the character of modern times, were then but little known among men. In such circumstances, to have learned to read, to have attended to the meaning of words, and to have employed the powers of the human mind, in any manner, on the sacred writings, were blessings to mankind. In Italy and France also there were some witnesses of divine truth, who opposed the abominations of the popedom.

The great scenes of political contention in this age, were, in the east, the Crusades; in the west, the disputes between the popes and the emperors. Civil, and even what is called ecclesiastical, history, is full of these subjects.* To my province they bear scarcely any relation. The former were attended with dreadful evils, and much augmented with the influence of that pernicious superstition, which commutes for offences, and taught men to indulge themselves in the worst of vices, through the hope of finding their way to heaven by the merit of a Crusade. I shall, however, examine a little, hereafter, the grounds of the justice or injustice of these expeditions, because the character of some pious men of great eminence is connected with the question. The disputes between the popes and the emperors seem entirely barren of instructive incidents in religion. They confirm, nevertheless, the Christian in the belief of those Scriptures which so accurately mark the character of Antichrist.† Gregory VII. commonly called Hildebrand, began the scheme, which fifty years after was completely accomplished, namely, of rescuing the election of the popes from the emperors, and of fixing it entirely in the college of Cardinals, in which it still continues. The

* The emperor of Germany, Henry III. surnamed the Black, hearing of the scandalous lives of the popes and the clergy, called the viiith General Council at Sutri, A.D. 1046; when the three pretenders to the popedom were deposed; Gregory VI. for Simony, Benedict IX. and Silvester III. for the same, and wicked lives in general. See Bower, v. [Vol. p. 159.]

† See particularly 2 Thess. ii. 1 Tim. iv.

Popery triumphant: council of Placentia. A.D. 1095.

celibacy of the clergy, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, were established by the council of Placentia in 1095. Popery, in short, reigned triumphant, and no public profession of the Gospel, which professed independence of the Romish domination, could be endured in Europe.

It will be proper to close this general view of the century with a circumstance or two concerning Africa. That once fruitful mother of the Churches, who gloried in her Cyprians and Augustines, had now only two bishops. The Saracens, masters of the country, persecuted the Christians there with great bitterness: yet so infatuated were the African Christians with the love of sin, that they quarrelled among themselves, and betrayed their bishop Cyriacus into the hands of the infidels, who much abused him. Gregory VII. wrote to the good bishop, to comfort him in his distresses. A friendly letter, abounding with truly Christian sentiments, even from so imperious and unchristian a character as Hildebrand's, might convey consolation to the mind of Cyriacus.* Piety united with distress stands aloof from politics, and thankfully embraces truth as sent from her God, whatever be the instrument.

He, who seriously reflects in what glory the religion of Christ once shone in Asia and Africa; how dark, and idolatrous, and, at the same time, how insensible of their spiritual misery the inhabitants of those two quarters of the globe were, in this century, and continue even to the present times, will see with what reverential care the jewel of the Gospel should be cherished, while in our possession, lest we not only lose our own souls, but entail a curse on ages yet unborn.

CHAP. II.

THE OPPOSITION MADE TO THE ERRORS OF POPERY.

In the year 1017, certain persons, real or supposed heretics, were discovered in France, who were said to hold,

Heretics real or supposed, in France, A.D. 1017.

"that they did not believe—that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary;—that he died for the salvation of mankind;—that he was buried and rose again;—that baptism procured the re-

* Du Pin, 1st. edit. Vol. iv. Cent. xi. [c. 5.] p. 55.

mission of sins;—that the consecration by the priest constituted the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ;—and that it was profitable to pray to the martyrs and confessors." Other practical matters of a detestable nature were ascribed to them. On their refusing to recant before a council held at Orleans, thirteen of them were burnt alive.* It is not easy to say what was the true character of these men. It is certain that they opposed the then reigning superstitions, and that they were willing to suffer for the doctrines which they espoused. The crimes alleged are so monstrous and incredible, as to render the charges adduced against their doctrines very suspicious. That they, however, were truly evangelical Christians, is what I dare not affirm.

Some time after there appeared, in Flanders, another sect, which was condemned in a synod held at Arras, in the year 1025, by Gerard, bishop of Cambray and Arras. They had come from Italy, being the disciples of Gundulphus, who taught there several supposed heretical doctrines. Gerard himself, in a letter which he wrote on the subject, observes, that the disciples of Gundulphus travelled up and down to multiply converts, and that they had withdrawn many from the belief of the real presence in the Sacrament; that they owned themselves to be the scholars of Gundulphus, who had instructed them in the evangelical and apostolical doctrine. "This," said they, "is our doctrine, to renounce the world, to bridle the lusts of the flesh, to maintain ourselves by the labour of our own hands, to do violence to no man, to love the brethren. If this plan of righteousness be observed, there is no need of baptism; if it be neglected, baptism is of no avail." They particularly objected to the baptism of infants, because they were altogether incapable of understanding or confessing the truth. They denied the real presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper: they rejected the consecration of Churches: they opposed various reigning superstitions, particularly the doctrine of purgatory and the practices connected with it. They likewise refused to worship the cross, or any images whatever. The

Disciples of Gundulphus condemned, A.D. 1025.

* Du Pin, 1st Ed. Vol. iv. Cent. xi. [c. 13.] p. 110. [Dacherii Spicelegium, tom. 1. p. 604. ed. 1723.]

bishop of Arras, having examined their supposed errors, and, in his own opinion, confuted them, drew up a confession of faith, contrary to those errors, which he required the heretics to sign. As they did not well understand the Latin tongue, he caused the confession to be explained to them in the vulgar tongue by an interpreter; then, according to this account, they approved and signed the instrument, and were dismissed in peace by the bishop.*

It is very difficult to judge a cause by hearing only one side, and that side prejudiced to an extreme. If we are tempted to look on the doctrines of Gundulphus in a favourable light, whatever we may think of the characters of these his timorous disciples, from this short narrative of his enemies, how much more excellent might they appear, if we had his writings and sermons? As he did not deny the use of the Lord's supper, but only the doctrine of the real presence, it is probable that he held baptism also in a similar manner. If, however, he absolutely rejected the baptism of infants, the people who call themselves Baptists at this day may seem with justice to claim Gundulphus as belonging to their sect. The nature of mankind, ever prone to run from one extreme to another, will easily account for this circumstance of the rejection of infant-baptism. The practice had long been sullied with superstitious fooleries: the transition to its total rejection was natural. Yet we shall afterward see reason to doubt, whether this people did deny the absolute unlawfulness of infant-baptism, when we come to consider the religious views of the Waldenses; for the probability is strong, that generally those called heretics in France, Flanders, and Italy, in these middle ages, were similar to each other in doctrines and customs. And certainly we see in them a noble testimony to the existence of evangelical truth, a body of men in Italy before the year 1026, in doctrine and practice directly opposite to the church of Rome, spreading purity of Christian worship through the world with all their might, and distinguishing themselves from the general mass of Christians in the West. I cannot believe that they held marriage to be unlawful, though they were charged with this sentiment by

They opposed the Romish corruptions.

* [Dacherii Spicilegium, tom. 1. p. 607. Du Pin, Cent. xi. c. 13.]

their enemies: and notwithstanding some errors and blemishes, it is not to be doubted but that on the whole they were of the true Church of Christ. Faithfully to withstand idolatry and the reigning corruptions, required a light and strength far above nature, and I have only to regret, that, after a careful search, this is all the account I can find of them.

Not long after the supposed heretics of Orleans, arose the famous Berengarius of Tours, who wrote against the doctrine of the real presence. His writings called forth the most learned Romanists to defend the tenets of Paschasius Radbertus; and Berengarius was compelled to renounce, and to burn his writings. But he recanted again and again, and returned, says a contemporary popish author,* like the dog to his vomit. Whether he died in the same sentiments, is strongly contested between the papists and the protestants. The former quote William of Malmsbury,† who says, he died trembling. "This day," said he, "will my Lord Jesus Christ appear to me, either to glorify his mercy in my repentance, or, as I fear, to punish me for the mischief I have done by my example." The sentiment, whether founded on fact or not, is strongly expressive of the genius of the then reigning religion, which excluded the spirit of adoption and filial confidence in God through Christ, and supported the spirit of bondage and anxiety. And the effect was, in this case, proportional to the cause. Men had lost the Christian article of justification through faith alone; and believing salvation to be suspended on the merit of human works, they found it impossible for Berengarius, even on the most sincere repentance for his supposed heresy, to countervail the mischiefs which he had done by misleading others. Whether then we suppose the confession of Berengarius to be a forgery, or a real fact, it was delivered in the spirit of those who weighed human merits and demerits in opposite scales, and found no other method of determining the question of a

* Bertoldus Presbyter of Constantia. See Bishop Newton's iiid vol. of the Prophecies. [Diss. 24. c. 11.] p. 164. I have examined Du Pin, Natalis Alexander, A. Butler, and Mosheim, on this subject; and find the whole mass of information so very uninteresting, though prolix beyond measure, that the few sentences in the text seem to me all that is needful to be observed on the Berengarian controversy. † [De Gulielm. 1. Lib. 3. p. 114.]

man's salvation or destruction, than that which should result from the comparison of his good actions with his crimes. How impossible is it by such a procedure to give solid peace of conscience to a sinner! Joy, love, and cheerful activity in the Christian life, can have no existence on such a plan: but such was the general spirit of the religion of the times we are reviewing. It is not easy to decide whether the papists or the protestants were in the right, in the determination of the question: In what sentiments did Berengarius die? The former have the advantage of positive testimony in their favour. The question is, however, perfectly immaterial. The doctrine of the real presence depends not on the character of Berengarius for its decision. I know no marks of his Christian piety; and his repeated dissimulations render him no honour to either party. It is, however, of some moment to observe, that he was the instrument of calling forth a degree of salutary opposition to the errors of the times. He called the Church of Rome a church of malignants, the council of vanity, and the seat of Satan. He corrupted, say some old historians, almost all the French, Italians, and English, with his depravities. The expressions are much too strong; but, no doubt, a salutary check was given to the growing superstitions; the opposition to the popedom, though it did not lay hold of the central truths of the Gospel, might yet pave the way for still more effective exertions; and served at least to inform mankind, that the court of Rome was not infallible.

CHAP. III.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

THE * work of Christian piety, which had been successfully carried on in Hungary, was now crowned with still greater prosperity. Stephen the king, who had been baptized by Adalbert bishop of Prague, and who began to reign in the year 997, showed himself a zealous patron of the Gospel. Under his auspices, Astricus came into Hungary, opened a school, and educated ministers, while Boniface, one of his disciples,

Stephen king of Hungary began to reign, A. D. 997.

* Cent. Magd. Cent. xi. [c. 2. p. 27.]

preached the word in Lower Hungary. The zeal of Stephen, indeed, was much stimulated by his pious queen, Gisla, daughter of the emperor Henry II. He often accompanied the preachers, and pathetically exhorted his subjects. He suppressed barbarous customs, and restrained blasphemy, theft, adultery and murder. His kindness to the poor, and, indeed, his whole moral conduct, was admirable. His excellent code of laws are to this day the basis of the laws of Hungary. It is inscribed to his son Emeric, whom he exhorts to cultivate sincere humility, the true glory of a king. He forbids in it all impiety, the violation of the Sabbath, and irreverent behaviour in the house of God. This monarch defeated the prince of Transylvania, who had invaded his dominions, and took him prisoner; but restored him to liberty, on condition that he should allow the Gospel to be preached to the Transylvanians, without molestation. Stephen was a prosperous monarch, but found afflictions at home in the loss of all his children. His mind was, however, improved in divine things by his sufferings. He laboured three years under a complication of diseases, and died in the year 1038.* He had lived to see all Hungary become externally Christian, though Christianity existed there, adulterated, or clouded at least by papal domination, and by the fashionable superstitions.

Stephen was the first Christian monarch of Hungary. He died, A.D. 1038.

Gerard, a Venetian, had been much employed by king Stephen, as bishop of Choriad, a diocese of which two thirds of the inhabitants were idolaters. In less than a year, they, in general, had received the forms of Christianity from the pious labours of Gerard. The power of Stephen had seconded the views of the bishop; but the prospect changed on the king's decease. His nephew and successor Peter, persecuted Gerard: he was, however, expelled by his subjects in the year 1042, and Abas, a nobleman, was made king of Hungary, who being slain after two years, Peter was recalled, but was once more banished. Andrew, the son of Ladislaus, the cousin of king Stephen, was appointed king, on the condition of restoring idolatry. Gerard and three other bishops endeavoured to divert him from the design. But they were

Brief account of his successor, Peter.

* Alban Butler. [Sep. 2.]

assaulted on the road by duke Vathas, a zealous pagan. Andrew himself came up to the spot, and rescued one of the bishops: the other three, of whom Gerard was one, had fallen by the arm of the barbarian.—It is probable, however, that Divine Providence permitted their atrocious villany for the good of the Church. The heart of Andrew was moved: he had seen of what idolatry was capable: he examined Christianity, received it, repressed idolatry, and reigned successfully. After the Hungarians had seen such a prince as Stephen, and had felt the good effects on society resulting from the establishment of Christianity, that they could still prefer idolatry is a deplorable proof of the native power of human depravity. What long-continued exertions are necessary to establish genuine goodness in a country!

In Denmark,* Othingar, † a bishop of that country, extended the pale of the Church by his labours; and Unwan, the bishop of Hamburg, under the patronage of the emperor Henry II. cut down the idolatrous groves, which the people of his diocese frequented, and erected churches in their stead.

Godeschalcus,‡ duke of the Vandals, revived among his subjects the regard for the Gospel, which they had once embraced, and which they had afterwards neglected. It is not easy to know precisely what were the limits of his dominions. But I find Lübeck, Mecklenburg, and Sclavonia mentioned as belonging to, or as, at least, contiguous to his dukedom. Much has been said in praise of this prince, and of the success of his labours.§ He is reported to have, in person, exhorted his people with much affection in the public assemblies; and John, a Scotchman, the bishop of Mecklenburg, baptized great numbers of the Sclavonians. Yet this last people, together with the Obotriti, whose capital town was Mecklenburgh, the Venedi, who dwelt on the banks of the Vistula, and the Prussians, continued pagans, in a great measure, throughout this century. Boleslaus, king of Poland, attempted to force these nations into a profession of Christianity; and some of his attendants used methods to evangelize them, which were better adapted

* Cent. Magd. Cent. xi. [c. 2. p. 28.] † [Adamus Bremensis l. ii. c. 26.]
‡ Cent. Magd. Cent. xi. [c. 2. p. 29.]
§ Crantzius in Vandalia. [l. iii. c. 1, and 3.]

to the nature of the Gospel. Boniface, in particular,* and eighteen other persons, set out from Germany, to labour among the Prussians, and were massacred by that barbarous people. They seem to have been among the last of the European nations who submitted to the yoke of Christ. In the zealous attempts made for their conversion, though unsuccessful, we see abundant proofs, that the spirit of propagating the Gospel, which was the brightest gem of these dark ages, still existed.

Nor had the zeal of our own ancestors evaporated in this century. In the year 1001, at the desire of Olaus II. king of Sweden, some English priests were sent over into the north by king Ethelred. Of these Sigefrid, archdeacon of York, was one. His labours were very successful, and he was appointed bishop of Wexia, in East-Gothland. Having established the churches there, he preached to the infidels in West-Gothland, leaving his nephews to govern his diocese while he was absent. But they were murdered by the pagan nobility of the country. A melancholy proof, how strong the spirit of idolatry still remained in these northern regions! The same kind of family pride, which, at this day, preserves the remnants of popery in protestant countries, preserved the existence of paganism in Sweden. Sigefrid, however, returned into his diocese, died there a natural death, and was buried at Wexia.

English missionary to Sweden, A.D. 1001.

This man is said to have finished his course about the year 1002; an account inconsistent, as to the order of time, with that which has been already given. But not to trouble the reader with such niceties of chronology, as at this distance of time are impossible to be adjusted, it is more material to observe that he appears to have been an apostolic person; that on his first arrival in Sweden, he was obliged, chiefly, to preach by interpreters; that he prevailed on the king to spare the murderers of his nephews: and, that though he was very poor, he refused to touch the fine which had been exacted on those murderers, and which had been offered to him as a present by the Swedish monarch.† Gotebald, another English mission-

Also to Norway.

* Mosheim, Cent. xi. [p. 1.] Chap. 1. [s. 2.]

† Olaus Magn. b. xvii. c. 20. Alban Butler, Vol. ii. [Feb. 15, et Adam Bremen. l. ii. c. 40. ap. Collier in Eccl. His. Vol. i. p. 206.]

ary, was appointed bishop in Norway, and preached in Schonen.*

Ulfrid, a learned and virtuous Englishman, preached the faith, first in Germany, afterward in Sweden under the patronage of king Olaus; where he was an instrument of converting many, till, in the year 1028, preaching against the idol Thor, and hewing it down with a hatchet, he was slain by the pagans. See Adam of Bremen, who wrote his History of the Church in 1080. B. 2, c. 44.

Ulfrid slain by the pagans in Sweden, A.D. 1028.

Canute, king of Denmark, natural son of Swein II whose great uncle Canute had reigned in England, was carefully educated by his father, who had no legitimate issue. He became king of Denmark by election, warred against the turbulent barbarians his neighbours, and planted the profession of Christianity in Courland, Samogitia, and Livonia. His zeal for the maintenance of the clergy having disgusted his subjects, he was deserted and murdered. His brother Olaus succeeded, whose successor Eric III. restored the authority of the clergy. The Life of Canute was written by Ælnoth, a monk of Canterbury, who lived twenty-four years in Denmark, and who wrote in 1105. He tells us, that the first preachers of the faith in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, were English priests; that the Danes embraced the Gospel with zeal, but that the Swedes, obstinate in their idolatry, murdered an Englishman, named Eschil, while he was preaching Christ to some savage tribes. That Sweden, however, was chiefly evangelized by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, is the remark of Stiernman, in his treatise on the state of learning among the ancient Swedes.†

Canute IV. surnamed the Saint, murdered about 1086.

Ælnoth, a monk of Canterbury, wrote his life.

Olaus, king of Norway, assisted ‡ the Danes against Ethelred of England, and, in his return from England, carried over several priests; one of whom, named Grimkele, was appointed bishop of Drontheim, the capital of king

* [Adam. Bremen. l. ii. c. 29.] † Butl. Vol. ii. [Jan. 19.]

‡ [Butler, to whom Milner refers, says that Olaus assisted Ethelred, but Milner has rightly corrected him, as Olaus or Anlaf, as Henry of Huntingdon calls him, came with Swein king of Denmark: and it was not till after Ethelred had paid the tribute demanded, and all hostilities had ceased, that Olave visited Ethelred at Andover. Hen. de Huntingdon, l. v. p. 357, 358.]

Olaus. This prince abolished idolatrous customs in Norway, Orkney, and Iceland. He used to travel with zealous preachers, exhorting his subjects, and destroying temples. The pagans, at length, aided by Canute of England, defeated and slew him in the year 1030. His son Magnus was called home from Russia, and became king of Norway in 1039.*

Olaus II. king of Norway, slain by Canute of England, A.D. 1030.

The triumphs of the Gospel in Denmark were, upon the whole, very conspicuous in this century. Hear the account of Adam of Bremen, who wrote concerning the situation of this country in the year 1080. "Look," says he, "at that very ferocious nation of the Danes—For a long time they have been accustomed, in the praises of God, to resound Alleluia. Look at that piratical people. They are now content with the fruits of their own country. Look at that horrid region, formerly altogether inaccessible on account of idolatry; they now eagerly admit the preachers of the word." †

From this very imperfect account, for which I am obliged to Gibbon, and which he candidly admits to be true, we may collect, what a blessed work it is to propagate the Gospel of Christ; that no men deserve better of mankind than faithful missionaries; and, that the allegorical descriptions of the effects of real Christianity, which we meet with in the prophets, have a deep and solid meaning.‡ To see Danes and Englishmen enjoying together, in mutual confidence and charity, the blessings of true religion, must have been surprising to those, who had known with what savage barbarity the former had desolated the habitations of the latter. In truth, that religion which could mollify, transform, and rectify the heart of an ancient Dane, must indeed be divine. These are the triumphs of the Gospel. It was the preaching of the Cross, attended with the energy of the Holy Spirit, which effected this salutary change of manners in the north of Europe. Denmark had inflicted much evil on her southern neighbours, and they requited her with spiritual blessings. It is remarkable, that to this

* Butl. Vol. vii. [July 29.]

† Gibbon, Vol. v. c. 55. [Note 80 the Latin of Adam is given by Gibbon, which Milner has translated.]

‡ Isaiah xi. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid."

day, no nation has exceeded the Danes in labours for the propagation of the Gospel, in proportion to their abilities and opportunities. And it must be confessed, that they owe much to mankind on the score of gratitude, for the favours of the same kind which their ancestors received.

For want of materials, I cannot dwell on the particulars of the conversion of this people.* But the durable change of their manners intimates, that their country must have been blessed with one of those gracious effusions of the Holy Spirit, the consequences of which are commonly felt for ages after. Toward the close of this century, the northern nations ceased to invade the southern entirely. The last attempt was made by Magnus, king of Norway, on the isle of Anglesea; but he was repulsed by Hugh earl of Shrewsbury,† in the eleventh year of William Rufus. "That restless people seem about this time to have learned the use of tillage, which thenceforth kept them at home, and freed the other nations of Europe from the devastations spread over them by those piratical invaders. This proved one great cause of the subsequent settlement and improvement of the southern nations."

I quote the words of Hume, which represent in a very perspicuous manner the advantages resulting from the civilization of the north, not only to the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes, but also to the south of Europe. It is in assigning the cause of this happy change, that I am obliged to dissent from that elegant historian. He thinks that the effect is sufficiently accounted for by these northern people having learned the use of tillage. But, besides that he has no historical evidence of this fact, and supports it by mere conjecture, it is fair to ask, How came they to be so docile and tractable, as to submit to the arts of agriculture? Does a nation, habituated to arms and to idleness, easily

* One instance, however, is recorded, that deserves to be mentioned. William, an English priest, attended Canute the Great, in one of his voyages from England to Denmark. Moved with pity on account of the idolatry of the Danes, he desired to be left as a missionary. His labours were successful, and he was appointed bishop of Roschild in Zealand. King Swein having put to death some persons without a legal trial, William forbad his entrance into the Church. Several courtiers drawing their swords, the bishop offered them his neck. Swein submitted, conformed to the rules of penance imposed by William, and ever after concurred with his views. The Bishop of Roschild died in the year 1067. Alban Butler. [Sep. 2.]

† Hume, Vol. i. c. 5.

give itself up to industry, and the arts of peace? If we can answer this question aright, we shall know to what is to be ascribed the happy transformation of the north. Scanty as my materials have been, I have yet shown, that the Gospel had now been for three centuries preached in Scandinavia. To this, doubtless, as the principal cause, we must attribute the happy alteration of manners in those barbarous regions. Christian godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. While it conducts enslaved souls into liberty, and, turning them from the power of Satan to God, invests them with the garments of salvation, it also meliorates their condition in this life, and diffuses through the world the most salutary precepts of peace, order, and tranquillity. Let not men expect the general civilization of the globe by any other methods. When the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, then will the nations learn war no more. We enjoy at this day, the advantages of society derived to Europe, from the propagation of the Gospel, while we ungratefully depreciate the labours of those Christian missionaries, through which, under God, those advantages were conveyed to us. Our Saviour has directed us to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest; and every one, who breathes the genuine spirit of the Gospel, will devoutly obey the precept.

CHAP. IV.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

As the importance of our own country began to be displayed in this century, it will be proper to take some notice of the appearance of religion in an island, which, we have seen, had so distinguished a share in diffusing divine truth through the northern parts of Europe. Even the very little of evangelical religion which we may discover, may deserve our attention.

In the reign of Ethelred, a very cruel massacre of the Danes was, by royal order, made throughout his dominions. The rage of the populace, excited by so many injuries, was extreme, and made no distinction between the innocent and

the guilty. Swein, king of Denmark, amply revenged these cruelties, by repeated devastations: and the unwarlike Ethelred fled into Normandy to save his life, while his subjects felt all the miseries which might be expected from incensed and victorious barbarians. Among other instances of their hostilities, they levied a contribution on the county of Kent, and murdered the archbishop of Canterbury, who had refused to countenance the exaction.*

The author whose short account I have followed, does not deign to give us the name of this archbishop, nor to relate a single circumstance of his murder. I cannot but think, however, that he would have enlarged on the subject if it would have gratified his dislike of religion. But thus a conduct, at once the most magnanimous and patriotic, is buried in obscurity, because the hero was an ecclesiastic. Let it, however, receive the justice which is due to it from these memoirs.

The † Danes were besieging Canterbury, when Alphage, the archbishop, was entreated by his friends to save his own life. "God forbid," said Alphage, "that I should tarnish my character by so inglorious a conduct; and should be afraid of going to heaven, because a violent death lies across the passage. I have been the instrument of drawing over several considerable persons among these Danes to the Gospel: if this be a fault, I shall be happy in suffering for it. I have ransomed some of my countrymen, and supported others when in captivity. If Danes be angry, because I have reproved their sins, it behoves me to remember him who hath said, 'If thou give not the wicked warning, his blood will I require at thine hand.' It is the character of a hireling to leave the sheep when he seeth the wolf coming. I mean, therefore, to stand the shock, and submit to the order of Divine Providence." ‡

The archbishop, influenced by these motives, remained in Canterbury, and exhorted the people, as a Christian pastor: but the Danes entered the city by violence, and exercised the most horrid barbarities, particularly on ladies of quality, whom they dragged to the stake and burnt to death, nor did they spare even infants. Alphage, moved

* Hume, Vol. i. p. 144.

† Collier's Ecc. Hist. [Vol. i. p. 209. W. Malmesb. Lib. ii. c. 10.]

‡ Osbern de Vit. Elphegi. Hoveden's Annals. [p. 1. p. 431, &c.]

at these hideous scenes, had the boldness to expostulate with them. "The cradle," says he, "can afford no triumphs for soldiers. It would be better for you to exercise your vengeance on me, whose death may give some celebrity to your names. Remember some of your troops have, through my means, been brought over to the faith of Christ, and I have frequently rebuked you for your acts of injustice." The Danes, exasperated at his words, seized, and bound the archbishop, and kept him prisoner for seven months. His liberty, however, was offered to him, on condition of immense payments to be made by himself and by Ethelred the king. He told them that the sums were too large to be raised by any exactions, and he firmly refused to drain the treasures of the Church for the sake of saving his life; accounting it wrong to give to Pagans those sums which had been devoted to the honour of religion, and to the relief of the poor. The merciless Danes enraged beyond measure, threw him down and stoned him, while he prayed for his enemies and for the Church; and, at length, a certain Dane, lately become a Christian, dispatched him, in order to free him from his pain. One of his successors, the famous Lanfranc, doubted whether Alphage ought to be looked on as a martyr, because he had not died explicitly for the Christian faith. But Anselm, a still more famous personage, told Lanfranc, that Alphage was a real martyr, who died rather than commit an unjust thing. Nor is it easy to conceive that any spirit, less than that of a Christian, could have conducted him through such a scene, and supported him with so much fortitude and charity. Alphage was murdered in the year 1013.

Alphage, archbishop of Canterbury, murdered, A.D. 1013.

A preceding archbishop, probably his immediate predecessor, Elfric, in the year 1006, had directed in one of the canons published at a council,* in which he presided,† that every parish-priest should be obliged, on Sundays and on other holidays, to explain the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Gospel for the day, before the people, in the English tongue. While historians enlarge on the quarrels between the papacy and the civil power,

[Can. 23.]

* Collier, [Spelman's Concil. i. p. 572, &c.]

† [It is rather considered as a sort of Episcopal Charge, as there is no appearance of these Canons having been enacted at a regular synod.]

and descant, with tedious prolixity, on the superstition which were in vogue during the dark ages, they are too a to pass over in a slight and cursory manner such facts these, which appear too important to be overlooked. L the reader who has seriously considered the importance an excellency of evangelical truth, reflect on the preciousnes of the doctrines, which the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, an some of the plainest and most practical passages of th New Testament do either exhibit or imply; and he wi be convinced, that, if the canon of Elfric had been obeye with any tolerable degree of spirit and exactness in a num ber of parishes in England, the ignorance and darknes could not have been so complete nor so universal, as we ar generally taught to believe it was. Such bishops as Elfri and Alphage must have been useful lights in those times The Gospels read in the Churches, I suppose, were eithe the same as, or similar to, those which are read at this day nor is it to be imagined, that a familiar exposition of them in conjunction with the Creed and the Lord Prayer, woul be in vain; because, in every age, the preaching of Chris tian fundamentals is accompanied with a divine energy, an the word returns not void to its Divine Author, but prosper in the thing whereto he sends it.* The mixture of super stitious inventions might adulterate, but could not altogethe destroy, the efficacy of the word of God. Nor can I doub but many at this day, who boast of their exemptions fron papal ignorance, and who call themselves enlightened, be cause they have been refined by philosophical and politica knowledge, are themselves much inferior, in Christian ligh and spirit, to many who lived in the dark times of th eleventh century, under the benefit of such advantages o instruction as the canon before us afforded. For that ele mentary knowledge, which is the object of the canon, is eve more salutary in its influence, than the most ingenious sub tilties of literary refinement in religion. These, like th spider's web, are intricate, and are often found to be flimsy and void of any substantial advantage to mankind. Armed with catechetical knowledge, I conceive that serious mind would in that age find rest and food to their souls; and th love of God being, by this means, shed abroad in the heart

* Isaiah lv. 11.

would constrain the missionaries of that period to diffuse the Gospel in the northern regions with ability and success.

The facts, on which these reflections are founded, may show us, that God had not forsaken this island during the disastrous reign of Ethelred, though the political hemisphere was gloomy beyond expression. Ethelred himself had returned into his kingdom, yet was he never able to make head against the Danes, who at length, in the year 1017, brought the English into total subjection. Their king Canute, and his two sons in succession, governed England, which, however, recovered itself from the Danish yoke, and received Edward the Confessor, the son of Ethelred, as its monarch, in the year 1041. But the Saxon line, though restored, was unable to maintain itself on the throne, and soon sunk under the power of William the Norman, who in the year 1066, beheld himself the sovereign of England, which continues under the government of his posterity to this day.

Conquest of England by William, duke of Normandy, A.D. 1066.

Under William,* named the Conqueror, the papal power, which hitherto had by no means been so absolute in England as in the southern countries, began to be felt more strongly, and soon reached the same height which it had obtained in France and Italy. The tyrant found it a convenient engine for the support of his own despotic authority; and while he took care that every one of his subjects should, in ecclesiastical matters, bow under the yoke of the bishop of Rome, he reserved to himself the supreme dominion in civil affairs, and exercised it with the most unqualified rigour. Lanfranc, whom he appointed archbishop of Canterbury, zealously supported the power of Rome, and confirmed the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation by his influence and authority. His successor, Anselm, was no less devoted to the pope, and maintained several famous contests with his sovereign William Rufus, the son and successor of the Conqueror. This archbishop contributed much, by his influence, to settle the celibacy of the clergy in England; and

* Osmund, a Norman, privy counsellor to William the Conqueror, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, corrected the Liturgy used in his diocese. And he was thought to have done the work so judiciously, that the Service "In Usum Sarum," was received in other dioceses, and became common throughout England. For, before this time, every diocese had its appropriate Liturgy. Collier's Eccles. History. [Vol. i. p. 277.]

it must be confessed, that even the virtues of this great man, through the peculiar infelicity of the times, were attended with great disadvantages to the state of society. For it ought to be observed, that if we except his attachment to the authority of the pope, and his passion for the fashionable superstitions, his conduct was pious and exemplary; his zeal against the luxury, simony, and vices of the great, was laudable: and, above all, his defence of evangelical truth, adorned by an upright course of life and conversation, preserved under God some genuine remains of godliness in the nation. Nor ought we to follow implicitly the ideas of our protestant historians, who, in every debate between the king and the Church, are sure to decide against the latter. What could be more arbitrary, for instance, than the demand of a thousand pounds which William Rufus made upon Anselm? And what more warrantable than the conduct of the latter? * He offered the king five hundred pounds, which were refused in disgust. Anselm gave the sum to the poor, rather than rack his tenants to double it, and said to the tyrant,—"If I am used according to my station, all I have is at your service; if I am treated as a slave, I shall keep my property to myself."

And undoubtedly the rapacity and profaneness of the Norman princes, particularly of William Rufus, in the seizure and alienation of ecclesiastical benefices, were justly opposed by the bishops of those times. It is only to be wished, that they had conducted their opposition on the grounds of Scripture, and the precedents of the primitive Church, not on the authority of the court of Rome.

Nothing else worthy of a place in these memoirs seems to have occurred, in the general history of our island, during the course of this century, except what relates to the personal character of Margaret queen of Scotland: a woman of the rarest piety, and of a character fitted to throw a lustre on the purest ages. She was sister to Edgar Atheling, the grandson of Edmund Ironside, who was the son and successor of Ethelred. Edgar was a peculiar favourite of the English, because he was the last of the Saxon line of princes. In the reign of William the Norman, he and his sister found a safe † retreat in Scotland, under the protec-

* Collier, [Vol. i. b. iv. p. 267.] † Alban Butler, Vol. v. [June 10.]

tion of Malcolm, who, by the assistance of Edward the Confessor, had recovered the throne of Scotland from the usurper Macbeth. Malcolm married the English princess. Wonderful things are related of her piety, liberality, and humility. Through her influence, the ferocious spirit of her husband received a happy tincture of humanity. She was enabled to reform the kingdom of Scotland in a great degree, and to introduce a more serious regard to the duties of the Lord's day, than had been known in that country. She had by Malcolm six sons and two daughters. Three of her sons reigned successively, and were esteemed excellent monarchs. Her daughter Matilda was wife to Henry I. of England, and was looked on as a pious Christian. Margaret had taken uncommon care of her children's education, and the fruits of her labours appeared in their lives. Theodoric, her confessor, observes, that she was remarkably attentive in public prayer. "And," says he "she would discourse with me concerning the sweetness of everlasting life, in such a manner as to draw tears from my eyes." This same Theodoric, a monk of Durham, wrote her Life. She was afflicted with sickness at the very time in which her husband Malcolm was slain at Alnwick in Northumberland, in the time of William Rufus, in 1093. The bitter news was brought to her ears: her reflection upon it was truly Christian: "I thank thee, O Lord, that this great affliction is evidently sent to purify me from my sins. O Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy death hast given life to the world, deliver me from evil." She survived this event only a few days. A princess of such accomplishments could not have shone in vain in Scotland: but, most probably, must have led many, in a rude and ignorant age, to think that there was something real in godliness.

Malcolm III. surnamed Canmore, slain, A.D. 1093.

CHAP. V.

ANSELM.

THAT good men frequently appear to more advantage in private life than in public, is a remark which was perhaps never better exemplified than in this prelate, of whom all

that is known by the generality of readers is, that he was a strenuous supporter of the papal dominion in England. I can easily conceive that he might be influenced by the purest motives in this part of his conduct, when I reflect on the shameless and profane manners of the Norman princes. But his private life was purely his own, originating more directly from the honest and good heart, with which, through grace, he was eminently endowed. As a divine and a Christian, he was the first of characters in this century, and is, therefore, deserving of some attention.

He was born at Aoust in Piedmont.* From early life his religious cast of mind was so prevalent, that at the age of fifteen, he offered himself to a monastery, but was refused, lest his father should have been displeased. He afterwards became entangled in the vanities of the world; and, to his death, he bewailed the sins of his youth. Becoming a scholar of Lanfranc, his predecessor in the See of Canterbury, at that time a monk at Bec, in Normandy, he commenced monk in the year 1060, at the age of twenty-seven. He afterwards became the prior of the monastery. His progress in religious knowledge was great: but mildness and charity seem to have predominated in all his views of piety. The book, commonly called Augustine's Meditations, was chiefly abstracted from the writings of Anselm. At the age of forty-five he became abbot of Bec. Lanfranc dying in 1089, William Rufus usurped the revenues of the See of Canterbury, and treated the monks of the place in a barbarous manner. For several years this profane tyrant declared, that none should have the See while he lived; but a fit of sickness overawed his spirit; and conscience, the voice of God, which often speaks even in the proudest and the most insensible, severely reproved his wickedness; insomuch that he nominated Anselm to be the successor of Lanfranc. That Anselm should have accepted the office with much reluctance, under such a prince, is by no means to be wondered at: and, the more upright and conscientious men are, the more wary and reluctant will they always be found in accepting offices of so sacred a nature; though

Anselm becomes a monk, A.D. 1060.

Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury dies, A.D. 1089.

William Rufus appoints Anselm his successor.

* Butler, Vol. iv. [April 21. Vit. Anselmi autore Eadmer.]

it is natural for men of a secular spirit to judge of others by themselves, and to suppose the "nolo episcopari," to be, without any exceptions, the language of hypocrisy.

Anselm pressed the king to allow the calling of councils, in order to institute an inquiry into crimes and abuses; and also to fill the vacant abbeys, the revenues of which William had reserved to himself with sacrilegious avarice. Nothing but the conviction of conscience, and the ascendency which real uprightness maintains over wickedness and profligacy, could have induced such a person as William Rufus to promote Anselm to the See, though he must have foreseen how improbable it was, that the abbot would ever become the tame instrument of his tyranny and oppression. In fact, Anselm, finding the Church overborne by the iniquities of the tyrant, retired to the continent * with two monks, one of whom, named Eadmer, wrote his Life.

Anselm retired into Calabria.

Living a retired life in Calabria, he gave employment to his active mind in writing a treatise on the reasons why God should become man, and on the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation: a work at that time useful to the Church of Christ, as he refuted the sentiments of Roscelin, who had published erroneous views concerning the Trinity. For, after a sleep of many ages, the genius of Arianism or Socinianism, or both, had awakened, and taken advantage of the general ignorance, to corrupt the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Anselm knew how to reason closely and systematically, after the manner of the famous Peter Lombard, master of the sentences, and bishop of Paris; and he was properly the first of the scholastic divines. The method of ratiocination then used, was, no doubt, tedious, verbose, and subtile, and, in process of time, grew more and more perplexed. It was, however, preferable to the dissipation and inanity, which, in many publications of our times, pretend to the honour of good sense and sound wisdom, though devoid of learning and industry. Moreover, the furniture of the schools, in the hands of a fine genius like Anselm, adorned with solid piety, and under the control of a good understanding, stemmed the torrent of profane infidelity, and ably supported the cause of godliness in the world. Ros-

* [Anselmi Ep. l. iii. Ep. 40.]

celin was confuted, and the common orthodox doctrine of the Trinity upheld itself in the Church. What were the precise views of Roscelin will be better understood, when we come to introduce one of his scholars, the famous Peter Abelard, to the reader's notice.

Anselm, weary of an empty title of dignity, and seeing no probability of being able to serve the Church in the archbishopric, entreated the pope to give him leave to resign it, but in vain. Nor does he seem to have been justly chargeable with the display of an "ostentatious humility," when he had first refused the promotion.* The integrity with which he had acted, ever since that promotion had taken place, ought to have rescued him from the illiberal censure. "Rufus had detained in prison several persons, whom he had ordered to be freed during the time of his penitence; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the See of Canterbury." Was it a crime, or was it an instance of laudable integrity in Anselm, to remonstrate against such proceedings? I suppose the candour and good sense of the author, to whom I allude, would have inclined him to praise that upright conduct for which Anselm was obliged to retire to the continent, had not this same Anselm been a priest, and a priest too of sincere zeal and fervour. In justice to Anselm, it should, moreover, be observed, that one reason why he wished to resign his archbishopric was, that he believed he might be of more service to the souls of men in a merely clerical character, which was more obscure. And he was naturally led to assign this reason to the pope, from the observation which he made of the effect of his preaching on audiences in Italy.

Men of superior talents, however, are frequently born to drudge in business or in arts, whether they be in prosperous or in adverse circumstances. For mankind feel the need of such men; and they themselves are not apt to bury their powers in indolence. A council was called at Bari by pope Urban, to settle with the Greeks the dispute which had long separated the Eastern and Western Churches, concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost. For the Greek

* See Hume, Vol. i. [c. 5.] p. 302.

church, it should seem, without any spiritual reason, had denied the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son; and had, therefore, thrust the words AND THE SON* out of the Nicene Creed. While the disputants were engaged, the pope called on Anselm, as his father and master, for his reply. The archbishop arose, and by his powers of argumentation silenced the Greeks.

At Lyons, he wrote on the conception of the Virgin, and on original sin; and thus he employed himself in religious, not in secular cares, during the whole of his exile. A strong proof of his exemption from that domineering ambition, of which he has been accused. In the year 1100 he heard of the death of his royal persecutor, which he is said to have seriously lamented, and returned into England by the invitation of Henry I. To finish, at once, the account of his unpleasant contests with the Norman princes, he, at length, was enabled to compromise them. The great object of controversy was the same in England as in the other countries of Europe, namely, "Whether the investiture of bishoprics should be received from the king or from the pope." Anselm, moved undoubtedly by a conscientious zeal, because all the world bore witness to his integrity, was decisive for the latter; and the egregious iniquities, and shameless violations of all justice and decorum, practised by princes in that age, would naturally strengthen the prejudices of Anselm's education. To receive investiture from the pope for the spiritual jurisdiction, and, at the same time, to do homage to the king for the temporalities, was the only medium, which in those times could be found, between the pretensions of the civil and ecclesiastical dominion; and matters were settled, on this plan, both in England and in Germany.

Rufus dies, A.D. 1100.

Anselm returns to England.

If Anselm then contributed to the depression of the civil power, and the confirmation of the papal, he was unhappily carried away by a popular torrent, which few minds had power to resist. It seems certain, however, that ambition formed no part of this man's character. ["He was very fond (says his biographer) of retiring into his monastery: and once, after presiding in their chapter, he said in a playful manner to the monks, 'As an owl while she is in a

* "Proceeding from the Father and the Son."

cavern with her young ones is happy, and enjoys herself in her own way; but when she is among ravens, crows, or other birds, and is attacked and pecked at, is altogether miserable; so it is with me, for when I am with you, I enjoy myself, and it is the grateful and peculiar solace of my life, but when removed from you I live among men of the world:] the incursions of various cares distract me; and secular employments, which I love not, vex my soul." He, who spent a great part of his life in retirement, who thought, spake, and wrote so much of vital godliness; and whose moral character was allowed, even by his enemies, to have ever been without a blot, deserves to be believed in these declarations.*

Let us then attend to those traits of character, which were more personal, and in which the heart of the man more plainly appears. He practised that, which all godly persons have ever found salutary, and even necessary, namely, retired and devotional meditation, and even watched long in the night for the same purpose. One day, a hare, pursued by the hounds, ran under his horse for refuge as he was riding. The object bringing at once to his recollection a most awful scene, he stopped, and said weeping, "This hare reminds me of a sinner just dying, surrounded with devils, waiting for their prey." It was in this manner that he used to spiritualize every object, a practice ever derided by profane minds, whether performed injudiciously or not; but to which, in some degree, every devout and pious spirit on earth has been addicted.

In a national synod, held at St. Peter's Westminster, he forbad men to be sold as cattle, which had till then been practised. For the true reliefs and mitigations of human misery lay entirely, at that time, in the influence of Christianity; and small as that influence then was, the ferocity of the age was tempered by it; and human life was thence prevented from being entirely degraded to a level with that of the beasts which perish.

Anselm died in the sixteenth year of his archbishopric, and in the seventy-sixth of his age. Toward the end of his life, he wrote on the Will, Predestination, and Grace, much in Augustine's manner. In prayers,

Anselm dies, aged 76.

* See his Life, written by Eadmer.

meditations, and hymns, he seems to have had a peculiar delight. Eadmer says that he used to say, "If he saw hell open, and sin before him, he would leap into the former to avoid the latter." I am sorry to see this sentiment, which, stripped of figure, means no more than what all good men allow, that he feared sin more than punishment, aspersed by so good a divine as Foxe the martyrologist.* But Anselm was a papist, and the best protestants have not been without their prejudices.

But it is time to let Anselm speak for himself. We shall hear from him something by no means unworthy the attention of the most intelligent Christians. A direction for the visitation of the sick was composed by Anselm; † the substance of which is as follows. Two previous questions were to be asked by the minister: the first was, Dost thou believe that thou deservest damnation? The second was, Dost thou intend to lead a new life? When the sick man had returned an answer in the affirmative to these questions, he was further asked, Dost thou believe, that thou canst not be saved but by the death of Christ?—The sick man answered, I do so believe. Then the minister says to him, See then, while life remains in thee, that thou repose thy confidence only in the death of Christ; trust in nothing else; commit thyself wholly to this death; cover thyself wholly with this alone; involve thyself wholly in this death. And, if the Lord [God] will judge thee, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between myself and thy judgment: otherwise I will not engage in judgment with thee. And if he shall say to thee, that thou art a sinner, say, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins. If he shall say to thee, that thou hast deserved damnation, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my evil deserts, and I offer his merits for that merit which I ought to have had, and have not. If he shall say that he is angry with thee, say, Lord, I cast the death of the Lord Jesus Christ between me and thy displeasure."

It cannot be doubted, but all this process would be mere formality in the hands of many persons, both pastors and people. But so, even at this day, are several the most

* Acts and Monuments, Vol. i. [in Ann. 1098.] † Anselmi Opera, [p. 194.]

spiritual catechisms, and the most evangelical exhortations. While the world is, as it is, depraved and sensual, the very best means of grace will be lost on many. But it is not easy to conceive, that he who composed these directions could have been himself a mere formalist. They breathe the spirit of one who seems to have felt what it is to appear before the Majesty of God; and also how unclean and defiled with sin both his nature and practice had been: and how unsafe it is to rest on any thing but Christ crucified. The jewel of the Gospel, peace by the blood of Christ alone, which is the doctrine that gives law and being, order and efficacy, to all the other doctrines of Christianity, is contained in this plain catechism; and the variety and repetition, which the author indulges, offensive as they are in the light of criticism, demonstrate the author's sincerity and zeal, and are the natural effect of the impression which had been felt in his own conscience. For those alone whose hearts have been ploughed deep; who have been truly serious for eternity; have been well practised in self-examination; and are become well acquainted with their own demerits, are disposed to relish the peculiarities and the essentials of the Gospel. Let a man once know himself a sinner deserving destruction, and be truly desirous to become a new creature, and he will find that the Gospel of Christ is the only cordial that can console him. This cordial is here administered: and as it belongs to true penitents only, to the humble and the contrite, so is it administered by the skilful divine before us; or, in other words, that doctrine, which is "most wholesome and very full of comfort," namely, the doctrine of justification "before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings," * is preached by a bishop of the eleventh century. So strong was the provision made by the God of all grace for the preservation of evangelical truth in the darkest times. With happy inconsistency, Anselm, in seeking peace to his conscience, and in preaching peace to others, sees none of the manifold superstitious methods with which the papacy abounded, and which he himself professed. I suppose he would give some lower meaning to the doctrine of the merits of Saints and

* See 11th Article of Religion.

the efficacy of pilgrimages; some meaning, which should not interfere with a simple application to Jesus Christ. And this was the method of many other pious spirits in those ages. The reader is desired to observe, however, that we have found the essential and leading doctrine of real Christianity in the possession of Anselm: and hence we are at no loss to account for the superior piety and virtue which rendered him the ornament of the times in which he lived, though they exempted him not from the common frailty of being seduced by the prejudices of education. The inestimable benefit of reading, and meditating on the divine word with prayer, may, from this example, be inferred. Such reading and meditation were the delight and employment of Anselm through life; and he found the word of God a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths.

Hence also it is not to be wondered at that he should so seriously oppose the anti-trinitarian refinements of Roscelin. He, who finds relief to his own mind in the death of Christ, can never behold with indifference the attacks made on the dignity of Christ's person. And though, in that rude age, men had not, so commonly as in our times, learned to express a contempt for the Scriptures, yet there were those, who ridiculed and pretended to argue against their divine inspiration. The zeal of Anselm, who lived for eternity, by faith in Christ, was induced to oppose these attempts, in a work intitled "The Fool refuted." * The ingenuity and acuteness of the archbishop were displayed with good effect in this treatise. It is proper to observe, also, that this great man was the real inventor of the argument, erroneously attributed to Descartes, which undertakes to prove the existence of God from the idea of infinite perfection, which is to be found, without exception, in every man's mind.†

Thus did Anselm employ himself in the defence of divine truth and serious religion. His knowledge of the Scriptures was, I am persuaded, so sound, and his love of them so sincere, that if he had met with direct opposition, on these infinitely momentous subjects, from the court of Rome, he would have sooner pronounced the pope to be Antichrist,

* Liber adversus insipientem.——See Maclaine's transl. of Mosheim, Vol. i. Cent. xi. p. 530. Quarto edition. † See Id. p. 483.

than have parted with his evangelical sentiments and profession. But the course of events threw him into such circumstances, that it became the temporal interest of the court of Rome to cherish and honour the archbishop.

Hear with what seriousness he expresses his views concerning his own justification before God. "I am conscious that I deserve damnation, and my repentance suffices not for satisfaction; but certain it is that thy mercy abounds above all offences." *

The works of this great prelate are partly scholastical, partly devotional. Taken together, they demonstrate him to have been eminently endowed with genius and piety. Like Augustine, whom he seems to have followed as his model, he abounds both in profound argumentation on the most abstruse and difficult subjects, and in devout and fervent meditations on practical godliness. But it will not be so much adapted to the purpose of this history to analyze his tracts, as to give some detached passages on matters of real Christian importance.

In his treatise on the reason why God became man,† he says, "I see that the man whom we seek as qualified to be our Mediator must be of this description; he must not die of necessity, because he must be omnipotent; nor of debt, because he must not be a sinner; and yet he must die voluntarily, because it was necessary that he should do so, as Mediator." "As it is necessary that man should satisfy for the sin of man, therefore none could make satisfaction, but he who was properly man, Adam himself, or one of his race. That Adam himself could satisfy was impossible." ‡

He thus expresses his admiration, while he meditates on the power of the cross.§ "O hidden fortitude! that a man hanging on the cross should suspend eternal death, which oppressed mankind! That a man, nailed to the cross, should [set free] the world, [condemned to] everlasting destruction. O secret powers! that a man, condemned with robbers, should save men condemned with devils; that a man extended on a cross should draw all things to himself! O secret virtue! that one, expiring in agony, should draw

* Anselm's Meditations. [Meditat. 3. p. 209.]
† Cur Deus homo, Lib. ii. c. 11. ‡ Idem. c. 8.
§ De Medit. redempt. hum. c. 1.

innumerable souls from hell; that man should take [upon him] the death of the body and destroy the death of souls!"

Speaking of the humiliation of Christ,* he observes,† "He assumed poverty, yet lost not his riches; rich within, poor without. God was latent in riches; man was apparent in poverty. By that blood we have lost the rags of iniquity, that we might be clothed with the garment of immortality. Lest we should not dare with our poverty to approach him, who has all riches in his hand, he exhibited himself poor; that is, God condescended to take upon him our nature. That man might return to internal, spiritual riches, God condescended to appear outwardly poor. We should have wanted at least one proof of his tender love to us, unless he had taken upon him our poverty, and he himself had sustained, for a time, that indigence, from which he delivers us."

The reader, from these specimens, may form some idea of the felicity of thought, which enabled this prelate to unite practical devotion with scholastic theology, and to educe the most cogent motives to gratitude and pious affections from those mysterious doctrines, which have ever been esteemed, by wise and holy men, the special glory of Christianity.

The following thought seems to throw no small light on some of the most sublime ideas of Scripture: [it occurs in his observations] on the first chapter to the Ephesians. "In the revelation of the mystery of our Lord's incarnation, the angels themselves received an advancement of dignity. Even their joy was increased, when they began to receive men into their fellowship. Christ indeed died not for angels; nevertheless, the fruits of his redemption tend to their benefit. The enmity, which sin had caused between the angelic and human nature, is done away; and even from the redemption of men the loss of the ancient angelic ruin is repaired. Thus heavenly and earthly things are renewed: those, however,

* On 2 Cor. viii.

† [The commentary on various parts of Scripture which fills the two first Vols of the Edition of Anselm's works, published at Colon. 1612., is now generally believed not to have been the work of the Archbishop: but either that of Anselm, school-master, and Dean of Laon, who lived some few years later; or, of William of Paris, and Herveus, a Monk of Dol. the latter being supposed to have written the Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles, towards the beginning of the xiith Century.]

only, who were in Christ elected and predestinated before the foundation of the world, obtain this benefit. For in him they always were and are, whom God hath chosen from eternity."

His views of the virtue and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ he thus expresses: * "Christ was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin.—For, in the law, the sacrifices, which are offered for sins, are called sins. Hence Christ is called sin, because he was offered for sin.†—He hath blotted out all sin, original and actual; hath fulfilled all righteousness, and opened the kingdom of heaven.—By one offering he perfects for ever: ‡ for, to the end of the world, that victim will be sufficient for the cleansing of all his people. If they sin a thousand times, they need no other Saviour, because this suffices for all things, and cleanses every conscience from sin." I need not say of a man so holy and upright, that he meant not to encourage sin, while he magnifies the savour of divine peace, through the blood of Christ, which his own conscience had experienced.

"Though § all who were to be saved could not be present when Christ made that redemption, yet so great was the virtue of that death, that its effects are extended to those who are absent or remote, in regard to place and time."

Hear how divinely he speaks of the Holy Spirit and his operations. "The Holy Spirit is evidently declared to be God, ‖ because, unless he were God, he would not have a temple. He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.¶ As if he had said: As ye perceive this breath,—by which I intimate to you the Holy Spirit, as spiritual objects are intimated by sensible things,—to proceed from my body, so know that the Holy Spirit proceeds from my Person, even from the secret of my Deity." An interpretation worthy of him, who confuted the Greeks in the article of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. Indeed every precious fundamental of Christianity appears in his writings. Remove the rubbish of superstition, and view the inward man; and you see in Anselm all that is vital and essential in godliness. Nor is he content

* On 2 Cor. v. † [On Heb. ix. 12.] ‡ Heb. x. [1—4.]
§ B. ii. Cur Deus homo, c. 16. ‖ On 1 Cor. vi. [19, and 20.]
¶ De processione [Spiritus c. 10. p. 54.]

with orthodoxy of sentiment: let us hear how he pants after God, and learn from him to apply, by prayer, for the power of the doctrine which we profess.* "Draw me, Lord, into thy love. As thy creature, I am thine altogether; make me to be so in love. See, Lord, before thee is my heart: it struggles; but, of itself, it can effect nothing. Do thou what it cannot do. Admit me into the secret chamber of thy love. I ask, I seek, I knock. Thou who causest me to ask, cause me to receive. Thou givest me to seek, give me to find. Thou teachest me to knock, open to me knocking. To whom dost thou give, if thou deniest him who askest? Who finds, if he that seeks is disappointed? To whom dost thou open, if thou shuttest to him that knocks? What dost thou give to him, who prays not, if thou deniest thy love to him who prays? From thee I have the desire: Oh, may I have the fruition! Stick close to him; stick close, importunately, my soul." Let this suffice as a specimen of those groanings which cannot be uttered,† of which the breast of Anselm was conscious, and which, in every age of the Church, have been known by the real people of God. These groanings are too much neglected, even where they are not altogether contemned, among men; but they are delightful in the ears of the heavenly host, and inferior only in harmony to the praises of just men made perfect.

This holy personage appears, from his comments on the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters to the Romans, to have understood the right use of the Law and the Gospel; the power and pollution of indwelling sin: its augmentation in the heart from the irritation of the law which forbids evil; and the real and solid relief from guilt, by the grace of Jesus Christ. These subjects are well understood, that is, sufficiently for all practical purposes, even by persons who have no pretensions to skill in languages or criticism; provided they have felt the lost condition of fallen man, and have been taught by the Spirit of God, in an effectual manner, to apply the medicine of the Gospel: whereas they are altogether hidden from the wise and prudent of this world;‡ from men, who may possess much learning and acuteness, and who trust in the strength of their own knowledge and

* De Meditat. Cap. 7. † Romans viii. 26. ‡ 1 Corin. i. 19.

acquirements; but whose hearts have never been truly humbled, or opened* to the reception of spiritual knowledge. The Apostle of the Gentiles was divinely commissioned to explain the important points; and I find Anselm to have known them experimentally; but, let it suffice just to have mentioned these things in this place. They have been copiously illustrated by many writers since the Reformation. So various, however, and so abundant was the knowledge of Anselm in the divine life, that he wrote with no less precision on practical, than on mysterious subjects. Observe, for instance, how justly he describes the evil of rash judgment.† "There are two cases in which we ought to guard against rash judgment, first, when the intention of him, whom we are disposed to blame, is uncertain; secondly, when it is uncertain how the person will turn out in THE END, who is the present object of censure. A person, for instance, refuses to fast, complaining of his bodily infirmities; if you, disbelieving him, impute his refusal to a spirit of intemperance, you are guilty of the sin of rash judgment. Moreover, though his gluttony be unquestionably evident, yet if you censure him, as if his recovery to holiness were impossible, you are guilty of censoriousness. Let us not then censure things which are DUBIOUS, as if they were CERTAIN; nor reprehend even MANIFEST evils in such a manner, as to represent them absolutely INCURABLE. Of uncertain things, those are most prone to judge rashly who take more delight in inveighing against what is amiss than in correcting it: and the vice of censoriousness itself may be traced up either to pride or to envy."

On the awful subject of predestination his views are similar to those of Augustine. Suffice it to quote a single sentence. "It cannot be investigated why God comes to this man in the way of mercy; to that, in the way of justice. For no creature can decide why he hath mercy on this person, rather than on that." ‡

In his comments on the fifth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he beautifully illustrates the all-important doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; on which subject it may suffice to produce a single quotation from one of his

* Acts xvi. 14. † On Rom. xiv. [10—13.]

‡ On Rom. xi. [33—36.]

systematical treatises.* "If, as it is evident, the heavenly city must receive its complete number from the human race in addition to the angels who fell not, and if this be impossible without a satisfaction made to the divine Justice; if God alone can make this satisfaction; if man is bound in justice to make it, it follows that [one who is God-man] must do so." † So clearly were the essentials of salvation discerned, in one of the darkest periods of the Church: and there is not an humble soul, in any age, who seeks out the works of the Lord with admiration and delight, but he will join with the pious archbishop in his meditation. "The wicked sins, and the just is punished; the impious offends and the pious is condemned: what the servant perpetrates, the master compensates; in fine, the evil which man commits, of that evil [God] endures the punishment." ‡ It would carry me too far to transcribe all his devout reflections and meditations on these subjects. One remark, however, which glances at the great corruption of doctrine, that originated from the mistaken philosophy of free-will,§ should not be omitted. "If natural possibility by free-will, as the wise of this world say, be sufficient unto salvation, both for knowledge and for practice, then Christ is dead in vain, and his cross is of none effect. But so surely as human salvation depends on the cross, so surely is that secular wisdom convicted of folly, which knows not the virtue of the cross, and substitutes a phantom of human merit and ability in its room." ‖

"We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery," says St. Paul. The real doctrine of salvation needs, therefore, a stronger light than the world, weak and distempered in discernment as it is by sin, can endure. Hence it always appears foolish to the natural man. Are we to wonder,

* Cur Deus homo, b. ii. c. 6.

† [That is, make satisfaction, the original is necesse est ut eam faciat Deus homo.] ‡ B. Meditat. [p. 195. c. ed. Col. 1612.]

§ I have used the term FREE-WILL in this, and in some other places, in compliance with custom, though the expression leads to a confusion of ideas on the subject. It is as absurd to talk of the freedom of the will, as of the freedom of liberty; for, we can have no other rational idea of freedom in men's actions, but that of their being VOLUNTARY.—If men act voluntarily, they act freely; responsibility is attached to what is VOLUNTARY, provided the subject be of sound understanding. When men do as they please, they are answerable for their conduct. This is a simple state of the case.—See Locke's Essay on Hum. Und. and Edwards on Free-will.

‖ On 1 Cor. i. [17—21.]

therefore, that men of secular wisdom should despise it? That they should call the ideas of St. Paul, which Anselm illustrates, jejune, systematical, abstruse, unintelligible? That they should pronounce the Christian experience, which has those ideas for its basis, illusory, fanatical, and visionary? There have not been wanting, however, men of sound intellect and of solid learning, in every age, who have found the Gospel of Christ to be the power of God to salvation. Anselm was one of these. Amidst the gloom of superstition with which he was surrounded, he was yet enabled to describe, and vindicate every fundamental of evangelical doctrine: though a papist, he appeals to the Scriptures: he expounds them, by opening the plain, grammatical sense of St. Paul; and it behoves men, who call themselves Protestants, or who boast of the superior light of this age, to confute his arguments, or at least to own that they do not believe the Scriptures to be divine. If original sin be a true doctrine, it is to be expected, that men leaning to their own understanding would reject the doctrine of the remedy for a disease which they do not feel. If the fever of pride have caused men to lose all sense of their fallen condition, ought their reasonings to be regarded by those who feel what that condition is, and to what a state of misery sin has reduced them? If human powers, by the natural exertion of the will, exclusively of grace, be indeed sufficient to guide men into the way of salvation, then the principle of effectual grace through the mediation of Christ, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit, is doubtless unnecessary. Let experience therefore decide by the fruits. Schemes and theories of doctrine, either wholly or partly subversive of all ideas of grace, have long been patronized by persons of great celebrity in the Christian world. What have these schemes and theories done for mankind? Who, among these philosophers can be compared, I will not say with many Protestant divines, but even with Anselm, who lived, under a cloud of superstitious disadvantages, in humility, sincerity, piety, charity, and heavenly-mindedness? It is allowed, even by his enemies, that his life was in the right: and all the true holiness of practice which has appeared in the world, has ever originated from such doctrines as he professed. What has been the consequence of doctrines grafted on human merit and

ability, but an inundation of vice and wickedness? We have lived, indeed, to see this consequence exhibited in full perfection in France. Since Christian ideas were almost exploded there, that country has been one vast theatre of all that is execrable among men. Even the military success of those infidels has only propagated misery; and their triumphs, like those of Satan, while they multiply the calamities of others, add only a fresh accumulation to their own. Is it the same thing to forbid crimes, as to prevent them, ye innovators without discernment? * Is it the same thing to despise the wisdom of antiquity, as to understand it, ye philosophers without learning?

To those then who will not lend a patient ear to Christian doctrine, we say, it is divine; it has proved itself so to be in every age; the proofs of it lie open before you, examine, and confute if you can. And among these proofs, we adduce one of no mean importance; namely, that the Gospel stands recommended as the medicine of our nature by its holy effects. However you may dislike it in its principles, you must own, if at all attentive to matter of fact, that it teaches men in real practice to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and that the farther men remove from its system in their views of religion, the more rampant do they grow in wickedness and immorality.

Reflections of this sort should teach men to inquire, with serious and humble reverence, both into the nature and evidences of Christianity; and persons who feel at all the force of these, or similar observations, will find it their duty to pray devoutly for the divine influences. In this spirit of devotion Anselm excelled; and a few quotations tending to illustrate it shall close this article. There were some others in the eleventh century who lived and who wrote in a similar taste; but his eminent superiority over them all will justify me in omitting the account of their works.†

* The innovators here alluded to were continually, IN WORDS, forbidding crimes, and exhorting citizens to be orderly, &c.; while, IN FACT, they taught them to hate and despise the true preventives of crimes, viz. an effective government, a strong police, and, above all, the doctrine of the eternal punishments of the wicked. All this time the multiplication of the most flagitious enormities was forming a sea without a shore, which at length swallowed up the preachers themselves. Such are the effects of chimerical philosophy, and of the contempt of ANCIENT wisdom!

† It may, perhaps, be not improper to mention Bruno, the founder of the

He, who in the following manner, breathes out his soul in prayer, through the Intercessor and Mediator between God and man, and so seriously rejects the hope of any other advocate than the Son of God, could not really confide in the Virgin Mary, or any saint or angel, but must have rested in Christ alone, however difficult it may be to explain the consistency of his sentiments with the fashionable superstitions of the times, the infection of which he by no means escaped entirely.

"Thus, Father Almighty, I implore thee by the love of thy Almighty Son; bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to thy name: Free me from the bonds of sin; I ask this of thee by the only co-eternal Son: and by the intercession of thy dearly beloved Son who sitteth at thy right hand, graciously restore to life a wretch, over whom, through his own demerits, the sentence of death impends. To what other intercessor I can have recourse, I know not, except to Him who is the propitiation for our sins." * [In his observations on the 8th chapter of the Romans, he says,] "That the only-begotten Son should undertake to intercede for me with the eternal Father, demonstrates him to be man; and that he should succeed in his intercession, shows that the human nature is taken into union with the Majesty of the Deity."

He addresses the Son of God as "the redeemer of captives, the Saviour of the lost, the hope of exiles, the strength of the distressed, the enlarger of the enslaved spirit, the sweet solace and refreshment of the mournful soul, the

severe order of Carthusians. He was born at Cologne, was chancellor of the diocese of Rheims, and doctor of divinity there. He, with two other canons, prosecuted Manasses, archbishop of Cologne, for simony, in 1077. Manasses, in a rage, brake open and plundered the houses of the canons, and sold their prebends. He was, however, legally deposed. Bruno was offered the vacant archbishopric, but preferred a state of solitude. He is said, also, to have refused the archbishopric of Reggio. Notwithstanding the uncommon austerities of the order, which he instituted, he was obliged to attend Pope Urban II. formerly his scholar at Rheims. He was learned in Greek and Hebrew, and in the writings of the fathers, particularly Ambrose and Augustine; he followed the system of the latter concerning grace; wrote on the Psalter and St. Paul's Epistles,[1] and seems to have been unquestionably pious and heavenly-minded. See Butler, Vol. x. [Oct. 6.]

* [Liber. Meditat. p. 195. A. ed. Colon. 1612.] † Rom. viii. [34.]

[1] [This is a mistake, the Bruno here mentioned wrote nothing but two letters, and a confession of his faith; the commentaries were written by Bruno, Bishop of Segni. Du Pin. Biblioth.]

crown of conquerors, the only reward and joy of all the citizens of heaven, the copious source of all grace." *

The Holy Spirit he thus addresses in the same [chapter of this] treatise. "Thee, Holy Spirit, I implore, if through my weakness I have a very imperfect understanding of the truth of thy Majesty, and if, through the concupiscence of sinful nature, I have neglected to obey the Lord's precepts when understood, that thou wouldest condescend to enlighten me with thy visitation, that through thee, whom I have called upon as my succour, in the dangerous ocean of life, I may, without shipwreck, arrive at the [haven of eternal rest.]

Could the pious spirit, who believes and longs for the rest which remains for the people of God, express its most ardent breathings in language more adapted to her frame than the following? "Hasten the time, my Saviour and my God, when what I now believe I may see with eyes uncovered, what I now hope and [hail] at a distance, I may apprehend; what I now desire, according to the measure of my strength, I may affectionately embrace in the arms of my soul, and that I may be wholly absorbed in the abyss of thy love!" †

After having uttered many petitions,‡ he says, "I have asked many good things, my Creator, though I have deserved many evils. Not only I have no claim on thee for these good things, but I have merited exquisite punishments. But the case of publicans, harlots, and robbers, in a moment snatched from the jaws of the enemy, and received in the bosom of the Shepherd, animates my soul with a cheering hope."

With so intuitive a glance of Christian faith does he console his soul! It is in the same way that divine mercy is apprehended by all humble and penitent spirits. The person of Christ, and the doctrine of justification by him alone, are the objects and supports of confidence in God.

* Spec. Sermo Evang. c. 19. † Ibid. c. 18.
‡ [Lib. Meditat. p. 193. B. ed. Colon. 1612.]

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

